

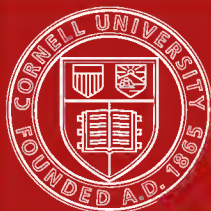


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## THE PROLOGUE TO THE *LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN* CONSIDERED IN ITS CHRONOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

The following discussion of the actual dates of the composition and revision of the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* takes up the question at the point where it was left in a previous article<sup>1</sup> on the Prologue as related to its

<sup>1</sup> *Publications Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 593-683. To a dissertation of Dr. John C. French (*The Problem of the Two Prologues to Chaucer's Legend of Good Women*, Baltimore, 1905), which re-argues the question from the point of view of the priority of the A-version, the reader may be referred for a criticism of the article just mentioned. It is impossible, within the limits of a foot-note, to do justice to Dr. French's suggestive study; yet a note is all that space allows. One may perhaps be permitted to observe, however, that Dr. French's criticism of the paper under discussion seems to rest on a misapprehension of the purport of its first three sections, which have been given in consequence a turn that obscures the real point at issue. Those sections (whose mention here seems necessary, in order to bring the problem itself into the clear) deal throughout with the relations of the Prologue, particularly the B-version, to its sources, leaving explicitly the argument for the relation of the two versions to each other to the final section, where the problem is considered in the light of the relations of *each* to the French and Italian originals. It surely needs no elaborate argument to demonstrate that if a poem *x* is derived from an original *y*, and *z* is a revision of *x*, a great deal of *y* will continue to appear in *z*, and that very obvious fact was taken for granted by the present writer in the discussion of the sources of B. Dr. French's interesting argument (*op. cit.*, pp. 32-38) to prove that A. also agrees in many points with those same sources deals, accordingly, with a man of straw. In the case of only one passage has Dr. French attempted to show what alone, on his premises, would invalidate the argument he is examining—the fact, namely, that A. is *closer* to the sources than B. And in that one case—the comparison (*op. cit.*, p. 36) of A. 51-52 and B. 60-61 with *Lay de Franchise*, ll. 44-45—the phrase “whan the sonne ginneth for to weste” (*quant il [le soleil] fait son retour*) is common to both versions, and “than closeth hit” (*Ses feuilles clot*) of A. is exactly balanced by “And whan that hit is eve” (*Et au vespre*) of B. Dr. French's conclusion that A. 51-52 “are much

French and Italian sources and models. The attempt was there made to show, on the basis of such relations, that B.

is nearer to the French than are the corresponding lines of F. [B.]” accordingly falls to the ground, while the striking parallel of B. 64 and *Lay de Franchise*, l. 47 is scarcely explained away by the remark that “*hir chere* and *son atour* are certainly not equivalent save in the sense that they are different figures of speech for the same literal original” (*op. cit.*, p. 39; cf. *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 615, n. 3). In like manner, Dr. French’s very sound conclusion (*op. cit.*, p. 33)—after pointing out that structurally A. as well as B. agrees in certain respects with the *Lay de Franchise*—that “the difference between the two versions, therefore, is not so great as might seem, for it is merely a difference in the treatment of the same material” [*italics mine*], again simply emphasizes the obvious fact taken for granted throughout the particular sections under discussion, which leave this (somewhat important!) “difference in the treatment” for discussion later in a passage (*Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 679–80) to which Dr. French does not refer. The same fallacy vitiates the discussion of the passages cited on pp. 65–66 of the dissertation. In other words, Dr. French confuses the issue entirely by pointing out *in extenso* what no one would think of denying—the fact that A. as well as B. contains passages which go back to the French originals; while in but one instance does he attempt to demonstrate what for his case is the *sine qua non*—that A. stands in closer relations to those originals than B.

As for the other main point at issue, the *balade*, Dr. French’s admission (*op. cit.*, p. 26) that “the ballad in F [B] is therefore somewhat out of harmony with its context, and bears the appearance of a passage wrested from its former connection to serve a new purpose,” while “in G [A], on the other hand, the ballad is perfectly in place,” grants the whole case (see *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 655–57, 681); while his criticism (p. 50) of the “awkward device”—as he elsewhere (p. 96) calls it—of the herald lark (A. 138–143) on the ground that “the allusion to his [the god of Love’s] spreading wings is . . . incongruous, for it is hard to conceive him at one moment as flying through the air and the next as walking beside his queen attended by a multitude of ladies”—this criticism unluckily overlooks the fact that Chaucer was so inconsiderate as to retain this same incongruity (B. 236) in his supposed revision! To mention but a single other instance where one fact has been overlooked in attending to another, it is in B. and not A. that the real confusion of antecedents exists to which Dr. French refers on p. 46, as a glance at the following couplets makes clear:

- A. 48–49. To seen *these floures* agein *the sonne* sprede,  
Whan *it* up-riseth by the morwe shene ;  
B. 48–49. To seen *this flour* agein *the sonne* sprede,  
Whan *hit* upryseth erly by the morwe.



was the original version and A. the revision. Assuming the soundness of such a conclusion, is it possible to fix at all

Dr. French's assertion (p. 32) "that the bifurcation of F [B] at line 196 is entirely arbitrary," is an extreme reaction upon a statement which, it may be frankly admitted, was perhaps itself somewhat strongly put. Arbitrary the division ("bifurcation" is Dr. French's word) at B. 196 is not; but a happier statement of the position criticized would have laid the emphasis first, as well as last (see *op. cit.*, p. 680—the passage which Dr. French overlooks), upon the *mechanical* character of the unity of B. (whose unity, of *this lower type*, it was never intended to deny), as contrasted with the *organic* unity of A. The contention is not for unity vs. lack of unity, but for a higher vs. a distinctly lower type of it.

Dr. French's main positive contribution to the discussion of the problem—for his "thorough line by line comparison of the whole of the two versions" (p. 3) can scarcely be granted when sixty-four lines, including such important variations as those of A. 135–36 = B. 150–51, A. 231 = B. 305, A. 253–54 = B. 327–28, A. 340–42 = B. 362–64, are merely appended (p. 98) in a list "for the sake of completeness"—is his treatment (pp. 75–98) of the lines partly identical in both versions. But practically everything Chaucer has done in passing, according to Dr. French, from A. to B., he can be shown to have done on the hypothesis of a change from B. to A., and even the instances actually cited seem hopelessly at variance with one another. Space permits brief reference to the "changes for metrical improvement" alone. When, to take a single example, *story* and *stryf* of A. 80 are (supposedly) changed to *story* and *thing* of B. 196, it is to avoid "a heaping up of sibilants" (p. 78); when *sat* and *than this* of A. 228, however, are changed to *sat* and *sith his* of B. 302, thus *introducing* the fatal second sibilant, it is to avoid "the recurrence of the *th*-sounds" (p. 80). But when, again, in A. 95 the Scylla of a repeated *of* is avoided, it is only to fall, in B. 199, into the Charybdis of a repeated *the*, which gives the very "repetition of the harsh *th*-sound" that, not only in the passage just cited, but also in A. 4 = B. 4, A. 5 = B. 5, A. 228 = B. 302, Dr. French had insisted Chaucer was bent on cutting out. Unluckily, too, the supposed change from A. to B. has *introduced* quite as many "awkward heaping[s] up of the *th*-sounds" as it has *obviated*—among others, A. 116 = B. 128, A. 137 = B. 151, A. 170 = B. 238, A. 209 = B. 255 (the refrain of the *balade* itself!), A. 342 = B. 364. Indeed, as one reads Dr. French's argument, one recalls with some bewilderment lines that are among the glories of English poetry: "Full fathom five *thy* father lies;" "That there hath past away a glory from the earth;" "Both of them speak of something that is gone." Scarcely less arbitrary than his standards of euphony seem Dr. French's other criteria of improvement, read in the light of Chaucer's own usage or that of other English poetry; but space precludes detailed examination here.

definitely the date of each? The present paper essays an answer to that question and includes as a corollary a discussion of the chronology of certain of Chaucer's other works specifically named in one or both forms of the Prologue itself.

A word, however, by way of definition of the point of view may be permitted to find place here. In such an investigation as the present one there is need, perhaps, of facing squarely what seems to be by no means an imaginary danger—that of allowing considerations of chronology or of sources insensibly to blind one to the paramount claims of the work of art as such. And inasmuch as in what follows the question of chronology will occupy space which (especially if one dare imagine Chaucer's sense of humor playing on it) must appear grotesquely disproportionate, it may be pertinent to say frankly at the outset that the interest of the present discussion in the mere chronology of Chaucer's work is, despite seemingly damning evidence to the contrary, an altogether subordinate one. It is subordinate, that is to say, to the appreciation (if one must tax again a word which has suffered many things of many cults) of the poems themselves. In other words, in so far as the establishment of the chronology genuinely illuminates the poems by bringing them out of comparative isolation into vital relation with each other and with the larger compass of the poet's work; in so far as it throws light upon the poet's *modus operandi* and helps one to "catch Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play;" in so far as it tends in general to a dynamic rather than a static conception of the poet's art, it more than justifies itself. In what follows, accordingly, it is the ultimate possibility of a truer, because a larger and more vital appreciation that is sought after, with however small success, in the seeming effort merely to fix certain dates. With this prefa-

tory confession of the substance of things hoped for, one may come with a freer conscience to what at the outset is a somewhat bald rehearsal of facts and figures. And the date of the B-version will be first considered.

## I.

In attempting to reach the date of B. two steps seem necessary: first, the determination, if possible, of the limits between which the time of composition must lie; second, the close examination of the possibilities within the limits thus fixed.

One of the limits in question has been already pointed out. For if the inferences of the earlier discussion regarding the influence of the *Lay de Franchise* on the B-version of the Prologue are sound,<sup>1</sup> and if, as seems clear, the *Lay* was composed by Deschamps for the celebration of May-day, 1385,<sup>2</sup> it follows at once that the first version of the Prologue was written after May 1, 1385. Is it also possible to reach from external evidence a limit in the other direction? On the basis of the very acute deductions of Professor Kittredge regarding the authorship of the *Book of Cupid*,<sup>3</sup> such a limit does seem attainable. For one may be reasonably certain that the writer of the *Book of Cupid* knew the B-version of the Prologue.<sup>4</sup> If, then, the poem was the work of Sir John

<sup>1</sup> *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 615-16, 620-21, 635-41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, 603-06.

<sup>3</sup> See the article on "Chaucer and some of his Friends," *Mod. Philol.*, I, 15-18.

<sup>4</sup> It is needless to repeat the evidence collected by Vollmer (*Das mittel-englische Gedicht The Boke of Cupide*, Berlin, 1898, pp. 49-50) and Skeat (*Chaucerian and other Pieces*, pp. 526 ff., under ll. 20, 23, 243). The passages there given are individually none of them entirely conclusive, inasmuch as they are in large measure commonplaces. The whole atmosphere of the poem is, however, that of the Prologue, and the fact that the author does undoubtedly borrow from the *Knight's Tale* and probably from the *Parle-*

Clanvowe, who died, as is now known,<sup>1</sup> October 17, 1391, this date will give a positive limit in this direction for the composition of the Prologue, which we may place, accordingly, between May 1st, 1385 and October, 1391—or, indeed, with some assurance, between May 1st, 1385 and the departure of Clanvowe for Barbary in 1390.<sup>2</sup> Within the

ment of *Foules* as well (Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Vollmer, *loc. cit.*) points with practical certainty to the Prologue as the source of the passages in question.

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Professor Kittredge, since the present article has been in type, for the exact date of Sir John Clanvowe's death and for the note which follows regarding its circumstances. The reference is found in John Malverne's continuation of Higden's *Polychronicon* (Rolls Ser., *Polychron.*, ix, 261): "Item xvii<sup>o</sup>. die Octobris dominus Johannes Clanvowe miles egregius in quodam vico juxta Constantinopolim in Græcia diem clausit extremum." Malverne, as Professor Kittredge points out, is the best kind of authority, since he was not only a contemporary of Clanvowe, but seems to have known him particularly well. What Clanvowe was doing at Constantinople is not clear. Perhaps he returned from Barbary that way; perhaps he was going on a pilgrimage. It is worth noting that William Nevil, his companion on the journey, died of grief. "Quam ob causam," continues Malverne, "dominus Willelmus Neyle ejus comes in itinere, quem non minus se ipsum diligebat, inconsolabiliter dolens nunquam postea sumpsit cibum. Unde transactis duobus diebus sequentibus in eodem vico lamentabiliter exspiravit" (*Polychron.*, Appendix, ix, 261-62). This William Nevil had gone on the Barbary expedition with Clanvowe (or Clanvowe with him); see ix, 234. Nowhere does Malverne say anything of Clanvowe's return. He does briefly describe the evil fate of the expedition (ix, 240): "Dux Bourbon . . . primo victoriam obtinuit de prædictis paganis; sed secunda vice ex adverso venit intolerabilis copia paganorum cum magna audacia Christianos compulit fugere ad naves eorum in multo discrimine personarum, sicque *Christiani qui vivi evaserunt a manibus paganorum ad propria sunt reversi de eorum evasione deum multipliciter collaudantes.*" It is probably safe to say that Clanvowe did not compose much love poetry after he started on the Barbary expedition!

<sup>2</sup> The question will certainly be asked: Does this date not likewise give the limit for the composition of A. as well? For Vollmer (*op. cit.*, p. 50) concludes his discussion of the relation of the *Book of Cupid* to the Prologue as follows: "Endlich eine stelle aus der nur in einer hs. erhaltenen, von der im Fairfax MS. stark abweichenden version A. . . v. 139/40 heisst es da: *This song to herkne I dide al myn entente, For-why I mette I wiste what they mente*, womit zu vergleichen ist [*Boke of Cupide*, ll. 108-09]: *Me*

period of five (or six) years thus indicated, is a still closer approximation possible?

In a poem containing an address to certain singers to whom he specifically acknowledges indebtedness, Chaucer gives evidence of having borrowed from a poem of Deschamps. Deschamps is known to have sent to Chaucer by Clifford certain poems of his own, with a request that the compliment be returned. There is accordingly the strongest antecedent probability that the particular poem of Deschamps which Chaucer did know, to whose writer, among others, he did, as it seems, make distinct acknowledgment, was among those which reached him from Deschamps himself through their common friend. The determination, accordingly, of the possible opportunities for a meeting between Deschamps and

*thoghte* (ebenfalls im traum) *I wiste al that the briddes mente, And what they seide and what was her entente.*" The parallel is at first sight a striking one, and the inference of a borrowing from A. would of course, if valid, date the A-version, on the hypothesis just stated, before 1390-92. But such an inference overlooks, as Professor Kittredge has pointed out regarding it, two important facts. The first is that the rhyme *mente: entente* is of so frequent occurrence as to render it worthless as evidence of the influence of one passage on another. Moreover, as a glance at the examples will show, the rhyme is also associated with certain other stock phrases, appearing in both the passages in question, which even further diminish its evidential value. See, for instance, the following: "'Never erst,' quod she, 'ne wiste I what ye *mente*. But now, Aurelie, I knowe your *entente*'" (F. 981-82); "'She com to diner in hir playn *entente*. But god and Pandare wiste al what this *mente*'" (*Troilus*, II, 1560-61); "'To telle me the fyn of his *entente*; Yet wiste I never wel what that he *mente*'" (*ib.*, III, 125-26); "'Answerde him tho; but, as of his *entente*, It semed not she wiste what he *mente*'" (*ib.*, v, 867-68); "'[By] prive signes, wiste he what she *mente*; And she knew eek the fyn of his *entente* (E. 2105-6). Cf. also G. 998-99; A. 2989-90; B. 4613-14; F. 107-08; F. 521-22; B. 324, 327; *Troilus*, II, 363-64; 1219, 1221; III, 1185, 1188; IV, 172-73; 1416, 1418; v, 1693-94.

The second observation, which applies to the coincidence in *substance*, is that in the *Book of Cupid* the device of assuming knowledge of the language of the birds is not, as in the A-version of the Prologue, a mere incident (however effective), but grows out of the fundamental motive of

Clifford within the limits marked seems to carry with it the fixing of the possible dates at which the *Lay de Franchise* could have reached Chaucer, and that, in turn, defines still more closely the date of the first form of the Prologue. Such an examination, however, it should at once be premised, by no means depends for its pertinence solely upon the acceptance of the particular inference just stated. For whether by the hand of Clifford or of some one else the *Lay de Franchise* clearly had somehow to reach England before Chaucer could make use of it. And precisely at the period we are concerned with the sort of communication between England and France through which alone the current literature of the one country could have any reasonable chance of reaching the other was kept within somewhat sharply defined limits by the exigencies of the Hundred Years' War, which was still dragging on. The fact that the negotiations for the various truces between France and England were frequently in the hands of friends or acquaintances of the two poets, so that their

the poem itself, inasmuch as the very thing it purports to give is a dialogue between two birds. If the poem is to be at all, the device is virtually inevitable, and the hypothesis of borrowing accordingly uncalled for. A very much closer parallel, indeed, than that in the Prologue exists for the Clanvowe passage in another poem of Chaucer's, where a similar couplet appears in connection with similar inherent requirements of the plot. In the *Squire's Tale*, when Canace walks out on the morning after the gift of her magic ring, she has new delight in the singing of the birds,

For right anon she wiste what they mente  
Right by hir song, and knew al hir entente (F. 399-400).

That is to say, in the *Squire's Tale* and the *Book of Cupid* alike the situations proposed carry with them as a corollary the employment of such a device, and in each instance, along with the almost inevitable stock phrase "wiste what they mente" would come the no less predestined rhyme "entente." No conclusion, then, of any sort can well be drawn from the couplet in Clanvowe, regarding the date of A. That to Chaucer himself, whose phrases had a habit of clinging to his mind, the fundamental situation of one of his own poems might conceivably suggest an incidental touch in another is a possibility of a different sort, to be considered later.

respective circles more than once intersected; the alternate smouldering and flaming not only of actual hostilities but also of the sense of antagonism itself; the very specific fact that Deschamps's personal attitude towards England during part of the period in question was such as apparently to preclude for the time the possibility of his sending a complimentary message to any Englishman whatsoever—this ebb and flow, in a word, of the larger tides of international affairs seems to have genuine significance for the smaller problem where our first interest lies.<sup>1</sup> The movements of Deschamps and Clifford, with their various implications, must accordingly be carefully examined.

Deschamps's attitude towards "la terre Angelique" was not at all times that of the *balade* to Chaucer.<sup>2</sup> In August, 1380, his little country house—his "maison gracieuse"—of *les Champs* at Vertus was burned "per ceulx de Bruth, de l'ille d'Angleterre,"<sup>3</sup> with a loss of two thousand francs.<sup>4</sup> To his hostility "toute generalment" as a Frenchman there

<sup>1</sup> It is not altogether unilluminating that the collector of such data finds in Deschamps a mine of historical material, while in Chaucer he discovers only—poetry! What follows, accordingly, even should it be deemed to serve no other purpose, may at least enhance by contrast our appreciation of what Chaucer might in his own day have been, and by the countenance and grace of heaven was not.

<sup>2</sup> Coming, as he does, very near being his own Boswell, Deschamps explains at length in *balade* No. 1154 (vi, 87-88), with the characteristic refrain "C'est de ce mot l'interpretacion," the terms he applies to England in the obscure Chaucer *balade* itself. "Chaque fois," said the Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, "que Deschamps parle de l'Angleterre, il devient obscur;" and for any light he voluntarily offers, one may be duly thankful.

<sup>3</sup> No. 845 (v, 17). See Nos. 250 (ii, 86), 835-36 (v, 5, 6), 864 (v, 42) for further statements regarding the catastrophe, and cf. Raynaud in *Oeuvres*, xi, 11, 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> We are left in no doubt on this point. "II. M. frans et plus lui a couste Ceste guerre," he writes in the third person to the king (No. 250); "II<sup>m</sup>. frans m'a leur guerre couste," he informs the Dukes of Anjou and Bourgogne (No. 864); in the identical line he also complains to the world in general (No. 835).

was thus added the tone of personal resentment, which one readily detects in a number of the *balades* directed against the English. It seems entirely reasonable, then, to infer that the message to Chaucer belongs to one of the not infrequent *ententes cordiales* that marked the progress, in the last decades of the fourteenth century, of the Hundred Years' War, rather than to the intervening periods when, the more bitter after futile hopes of peace, hostility ran high—an inference whose warrant a fuller presentation of the details may serve to make more clear.

The discomforts of the first Flemish campaign, of 1382–83, in which Deschamps took part with much groaning of spirit,<sup>1</sup> did not conduce to amicable feelings towards the English allies of the hated Flemings, nor did the second campaign of 1383.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1384, however, during the truce of Leulingham,<sup>3</sup> negotiations were begun looking once more towards a treaty of peace between France and England. John of Gaunt and the Earl of Buckingham and Essex were the commissioners from England;<sup>4</sup> the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy, Bourbon, and Brittany the ambassadors from France;<sup>5</sup> and the negotiations were to be carried on at Boulogne in Picardy. To Picardy in the spring of 1384 Deschamps himself was sent to inspect the fortresses (with the added possibility of a voyage to England)<sup>6</sup> and to await

<sup>1</sup> See Raynaud, XI, 37–38; *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 607, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaud, XI, 39–40; *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> From January 26 to October 1, 1384. See Rymer (2d ed., Holmes), VII, 418–20; cf. Raynaud, XI, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Rymer, VII, 429 (27 May, 1384), cf. 432. See particularly Armitage-Smith, *John of Gaunt* (1904), pp. 287–88, and references there given.

<sup>5</sup> Rymer, VII, 431 (27 May, 1384). With the French ambassadors were, among others, the Count of Sancerre, Arnault de Corbie, and Guy de Trémouille (Rymer, VII, 433), all of them friends or acquaintances of Deschamps (see Raynaud's index in *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, x, s. v. Corbie, Champagne (Louis de), La Trémouille (Guy de).

<sup>6</sup> *Oeuvres*, XI, 42.



at Boulogne the arrival of the French ambassadors. August seems, however, to have arrived first,<sup>1</sup> and meantime Deschamps availed himself of the opportunity to visit Calais in the company of Otho de Graunson, "flour of hem that make in France." The brief stay of the two poets in Calais was enlivened by an incident whose narrative makes an interesting pendant to the *balade* associated with Philippa of Lancaster, and taken in conjunction with it throws some light upon what nearly concerns us—the fluctuations in Deschamps's attitude towards England. He begins his tale as follows :

Je fu l'autrier trop mal venuz  
 Quant j'alay pour veir Calays ;  
 J'entray dedenz comme cornuz,  
 Sanz congié ; lors vint. II. Anglois,  
 Granson devant et moy après,  
 Qui me prendrent parmi la bride :  
 L'un me dist : "dogue,"<sup>2</sup> l'autre : "ride ;"<sup>3</sup>  
 Lors me devint la coulour bleue :  
 "Goday,"<sup>4</sup> fait l'un, l'autre : "commidre."<sup>5</sup>  
 Lors dis : "Oil, je voy vo queue."<sup>6</sup>

The interchange of amenities continues during an altercation over Deschamps's *laissez-passer*, he narrowly escapes arrest, and with Graunson spends a night which he later

<sup>1</sup> In the *Itinéraires de Philippe le Hardi* (ed. Petit) the time from Aug. 4 to Sept. 15 is given up to "Sejour a Boulogne pour le traittie de la paix" (p. 169). See also the documents for July in Rymer, VII, 433, 438-39, 441

<sup>2</sup> dog.

<sup>3</sup> ride.

<sup>4</sup> good day.

<sup>5</sup> come hither.

<sup>6</sup> No. 893 (v, 79-80). For the legend of the *Anglici caudati*—which Deschamps also makes use of in Nos. 671 (iv, 130), 847 (v, 20), 868 (v, 48), the latter beginning: "Franche dogue, dist un Anglois, Vous ne faictes que boire vin"—at first applied only to the inhabitants of Dorset, see *Roman de Brut* (ed. Le Roux de Lincy), II, 251-53; Montaiglon, *Rec. de poésies fr.*, VI, 347-48; P. Meyer, *Romania*, XXI, 51 n; Étienne de Bourbon (ed. Lecoy de la Marche), p. 234; Du Cange, s. v. *Caudatus*; Wright, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, II, 230; P. d'Auvergne (Mahn, *Gedichte der Troubadours*, No. 222); Godefroy, II, 167.

recalls in vivid terms.<sup>1</sup> Finally, however, the Dukes arrive at Boulogne, and the negotiations continue until September 14th,<sup>2</sup> merely extending the truce to May 1st, 1385. But it is clearly to this same period that the P. H. E. L. I. P. P. E. *balade*<sup>3</sup> belongs. For as has already been pointed out on other grounds<sup>4</sup> that almost certainly falls at the close of 1384 or the beginning of 1385. The presence at Boulogne of both the Duke of Lancaster and Deschamps during August and September, 1384, seems to account perfectly for all the facts in the case, and makes it still more difficult to doubt that the *balade* was sent to the Lady Philippa by Deschamps himself, in which case it may well have been seen by Chaucer.<sup>5</sup> That Deschamps, moreover, whose acquaintance within the circle of John of Gaunt is thus indicated, should not there have heard of Geoffrey Chaucer, is hard to believe, and one may fairly infer that at the close of 1384 the two poets knew something of each other's work. That inference and the fact that Deschamps was capable of two very different tones

<sup>1</sup> Est cilz aise qui ne se puet dormir  
Et qui ne fait toute nuit que viller,  
Puces sentir, oyr enfans crier,  
Sur un mattas et sur cordes gesir,  
Avoir or draps et sur dur orillier? . . .  
Et, d'autre part, oir la grant mer bruir  
Et les chevaulx combatre et deslier?  
Cest a Calays ; Granson, veillés jugier (No. 596, iv, 55).

<sup>2</sup> Rymer, vii, 441-43. The Duke of Burgundy leaves Sept. 15 (Petit, *Itinéraires*, p. 169); the account of Walter Skirlawe, sent to Calais "*pro tractatu pacis*," etc., covers the period 15 June-28 Sept. (Miroet et Deprez, *Les Ambassades anglaises pendant la guerre de Cent ans*, in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, Vol. LX, p. 206).

<sup>3</sup> No. 765 (iv, 259-60).

<sup>4</sup> *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xix, 608-10. I had entirely overlooked the corroboration afforded the view there stated by the facts, just commented on, connected with the peace negotiations of 1384.

<sup>5</sup> See Kittredge, *Modern Philology*, i, 5.

indeed toward England, may be of value in weighing the subsequent evidence.<sup>1</sup>

For we come, now, to the events which follow May 1st, 1385, the date of the composition of the *Lay de Franchise*, and the question at once presents itself: What was the first reasonable opportunity after May 1st for knowledge of the *Lay de Franchise* to reach Chaucer, either at the hands of Sir Lewis Clifford or otherwise? The first thing to be noted is that May 1st was also the date of the expiration of the extended truce. Another of the abortive efforts to turn a truce into a peace had just terminated. The Bishop of Hereford, William Beauchamp, Walter Skirlawe and Sir John Clanvowe on the part of England,<sup>2</sup> the Bishop of Bayeux, Arnault de Corbye, the Sire de Sempy<sup>3</sup> and others on the side of France,<sup>4</sup> had failed to reach an agreement, and by the 30th of April the English commissioners seem to have left France. That Sir Lewis Clifford had been with them there (a thing in itself by no means impossible) there is no evidence, and the fact that on May 4th, 1385, protection for half a year was granted Philip Bluet, "staying on the King's service with Lewis de Clifford, constable of Cardigan Castle in South Wales,"<sup>5</sup> seems to indicate that he was in Wales at the time. But even if Clifford had been at Calais, Deschamps was not,<sup>6</sup> so that at the actual

<sup>1</sup>The following *balades* of Deschamps have reference to the negotiations of 1384 at Boulogne: Nos. 785 (IV, 289), 66 (I, 162), 337 (III, 47), 344 (III, 62-63), 359 (III, 93-95). See also XI, 43.

<sup>2</sup>Rymer, VII, 466-67.

<sup>3</sup>See for each Raynaud's index to Deschamps.

<sup>4</sup>See the accounts of the Bishop of Hereford, Skirlawe and Clanvowe, all closing April 30th, in Mirot et Deprez, *op. cit.*, p. 207. From *Cal. Pat. Rolls. Rich. II*, 1381-85, p. 569, we learn that on May 18th Sir John Clanvowe was about to go to Wales on the King's service.

<sup>5</sup>*Cal. Pat. Rolls. Rich. II*, 1381-85, p. 569.

<sup>6</sup>See the account of Deschamps's movements in the spring of 1385 in *Oeuvres*, XI, pp. 45-46.

time of composition of the *Lay de Franchise* opportunity for it to reach England seems wanting.<sup>1</sup>

But immediately after May 1st hostilities were renewed more vigorously than for many years. Particularly was this true on the part of France, and Deschamps's patriotism seems to have reached at about this time a somewhat violent pitch. Not far from May 20th<sup>2</sup> the French Admiral, Jean de Vienne, sailed for Scotland, an event which Deschamps celebrated in two *balades*,<sup>3</sup> one of which ends with the sanguinary lines :

Du sang des mors de chascune partie  
Fleuves courent, et veritablement  
Les fils de Bruth mourront là a tourment,  
Et, des ce jour, n'ont espoir de merci :  
Destruiz seront, c'est leur definement,  
Tant qu'om dira : Angleterre fut cy.<sup>4</sup>

Nor was it long before Deschamps himself was actively engaged in the hostilities, marching with the royal forces on July 21st for his third expedition into Flanders, where Ackermann, the ally of the English, was making fresh trouble for France.<sup>5</sup> The month of August was spent before Dam<sup>6</sup>; on the 28th of September the King was again in

<sup>1</sup> One must of course recognize that poetry is not contraband of war, and may run the blockade in ways hard to trace. But we are dealing here with a case which seems to involve the relations of the *poets* as well.

<sup>2</sup> Terrier de Loray, *Jean de Vienne, Amiral de France* (Paris, 1877), p. 189, cf. pp. 185 ff.; *Chronographia Regum Francorum* (ed. Moranville), III, 75; cf. *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, XI, 46; Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 293, n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Oeuvres*, XI, 46.

<sup>4</sup> No. 26 (I, 106-07). The other *balade*, No. 143 (I, 268-269) is a less bloodthirsty prophecy of victory.

<sup>5</sup> *Chronographia Reg. Franc.*, III, 75, n. 3; *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, XI, 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, XI, 47. See particularly the *balades* referred to there and in note 1.

Paris,<sup>1</sup> whence Deschamps accompanied him the next month to Troyes, which he left only in November.<sup>2</sup>

But while Deschamps was engaged with the English allies in Flanders, Sir Lewis Clifford was fighting the French forces in Scotland. The invasion of Scotland by Jean de Vienne led to a call on the 4th and again on the 13th of June for the English forces to assemble at Newcastle-on-Tyne by the 14th of July.<sup>3</sup> From this call, however, Clifford (of whom the last previous notice is that of May 4th, already referred to), together with Sir Richard Stury, John de Worth, Thomas Latimer and Thomas Morwell, was on the 12th of June specifically exempted, and enjoined to attend on the King's mother, the Princess Joan, "ubicumque eam infra Regnum nostrum praedictum moram trahere contigerit."<sup>4</sup> The Princess Joan's will is dated August 7th, 1385,<sup>5</sup> and her death certainly followed within a few days.<sup>6</sup> On the 6th of August the King had entered Scotland,<sup>7</sup> and Clifford, so soon as released by the death of the Princess Joan, must have joined him there. That he did is indicated by the statement of Froissart that "en la cité de Karlion estoient en garnisson messires Loys de Cliffort, frère au signeur, messires Guillaumes de Noefville, messires Thomas Mousegrave et

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Rymer, VII, 473 (4 June), 474 (13 June); cf. Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> Rymer, VII, 474.

<sup>5</sup> Nichols, *Wills of the Kings and Queens of England*, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> The Monk of Evesham (*Hist. Regni et Vitae Rich. II*, p. 63) gives the date as "circa principium mensis Augusti." Nichols' statement (*op. cit.*, p. 82) that the Princess Joan died July 8, 1385, is a manifest error. On his assertion that she died "of grief for the King her son's just resentment to her son John Holland, for killing Lord Stafford in a fray" (*loc. cit.*), see Walsingham, *Hist. Angl.*, II, 130, and cf. the Monk of Evesham, *loc. cit.* See also Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 294. The Princess Joan's will was proved Dec. 9, 1385, and Clifford was one of her executors (Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 81).

<sup>7</sup> Wallon, *Richard II*, I, 243; Terrier de Loray, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

ses fils," etc.<sup>1</sup> Jean de Vienne did not return to France until shortly after November 26th, 1385,<sup>2</sup> and it is extremely unlikely that Clifford left Scotland while hostilities were still in progress. From May to December of 1385, accordingly, Deschamps and Clifford were employed in such a fashion as to make it practically impossible that they should have met in the interval. Moreover, the attitude of Deschamps toward England was clearly not such as would dictate the exchange of courtesies implied in the Chaucer *balade*. And finally, leaving the direct agency of Deschamps altogether out of the question, it is in the highest degree improbable that at any time during 1385 a French poem of so distinctly occasional a character as the *Lay de Franchise* should by any other medium have crossed the channel. It is probabilities and not certainties with which, indeed, we have just here to deal; but the probabilities seem decidedly against Chaucer's knowledge of the *Lay de Franchise* before the close of 1385, and therefore against the inference that the B-version of the Prologue was composed during that year.

The year 1386, however, opened more auspiciously, and in the early spring the circles of the two poets again intersected. As a result of the intercession of Leo, King of Armenia,<sup>3</sup> commissioners were once more appointed to treat for peace, including on the English side Sir John Clanvowe,<sup>4</sup> and on the French side Arnaut de Corbye, Louis de Champagne, and Charles de Trie<sup>5</sup>—the first two having been

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Kervyn, x, 394.

<sup>2</sup> Terrier de Loray, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> See the various references in *An Eng. Chron. of the Reigns of Rich. II, Henry IV, etc.* (Camden Soc., 1856), p. 146, and add *Chron. de St. Denys*, I, 418 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Rymer, VII, 491-94; cf. Mirot et Deprez, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-08. The accounts are from the 9th (10th, 12th) of February to the 28th of March.

<sup>5</sup> Rymer, VII, 497; cf. 496, 498.

among those who took part in the previous negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Charles VI, supposing that Richard II was coming to Calais to treat in person, advanced as far as Boulogne, but finding that only commissioners were being sent, despatched his own representatives to Leulingham, midway between Calais and Boulogne.<sup>2</sup> Deschamps, who seems to have been at this period, as *huissier d'armes*, in close attendance upon the King,<sup>3</sup> may have been—it is scarcely too much to say, probably was—present at these negotiations, as we know him to have been at those of 1384, although his name appears in neither case in Rymer.<sup>4</sup> Nor is there evidence of weight to oppose to any one who cares to conjecture that Sir Lewis Clifford may possibly have accompanied his friend Sir John Clanvowe and the English commissioners to France.<sup>5</sup> The records are silent as to his whereabouts from the mention of his presence at Carlisle at the close of 1385 to his testimony in the Scrope-Grosvenor suit, October 19th, 1386. For that he did not accompany the Duke of Lancaster to Spain in 1386, as Froissart's mention of a Lewis Clifford in connection with that expedition implies,<sup>6</sup> seems, in spite of Froissart, almost a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 758, n. 5, adding for Charles de Trie, index to Deschamps, *s. v. Trie*.

<sup>2</sup> *Chron. de St. Denys*, I, 426–27; cf. *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, XI, 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, XI, 45–48.

<sup>4</sup> The safe conduct granted the commissioners included, however, “leurs Gents, Familiars, Chevalers, Esquiers, Cler, Varles et autres, de quel estat ou condicion que ils soient, jusques au dit nombre de Trois cens Parsonnes” (Rymer, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>5</sup> It should be remembered that Chaucer's name, for example, is not included in the commissions of 1377 to treat of peace, although his own statement of accounts for both and Froissart's mention of him in connection with one prove him to have been on the two missions.

<sup>6</sup> “Et fut la ville de Saint-Jaques à ung chevalier-d' Angleterre bailliée a garder, et pour en estre le chief et capitaine, lequel on appelloit messire Loys Clifford, et avoit par dessoubz luy trente lances et cent archiers (ed. Kervyn, XII, 94–95). Cf. *Scrope-Grosvenor Roll*, II, 429; Morant, *Hist. and Antiq. of the Deanery of Craven*, p. 315; Beltz, *Memorials of the Order of the Garter*, p. 283.

certainty. Lancaster and those who were to accompany him had already testified at Plymouth in the Scrope-Grosvenor case;<sup>1</sup> Clifford, on the other hand, gave his evidence in the refectory of Westminster Abbey on October 19th.<sup>2</sup> The fact that he was not among those who testified at Plymouth, and the immediate return from Spain that would necessarily have been involved in his presence later at the trial render his connection with the expedition highly improbable. Moreover, Froissart's reference is to a date after the marriage of Philippa of Lancaster, that is, after February 2nd, 1387,<sup>3</sup> so that even though Froissart be correct (which is unlikely),<sup>4</sup> there is no need to suppose that Clifford left for Spain until after October, 1386.<sup>5</sup> There seems to have been, accordingly, as there had not been since the date of the *Lay de Franchise*, an opportunity in March, 1386, for Deschamps and Clifford to come together. That they did so meet one cannot from the facts at hand assert; but the possibility of a meeting may not be left out of the account.

Moreover, in June of the same year still another opportunity should perhaps be recognized. Professor Kittredge

<sup>1</sup> Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310; *Scrope-Grosvenor Roll*, I, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Scrope-Grosvenor Roll*, I, 183; Beltz, *Memorials of the Order of the Garter*, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> See *Modern Philology*, I, 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Froissart's account of the Galician campaign is simply hopeless. Chronology and topography are nothing to him. The Marshal takes a town in the heart of Leon, and goes back to Santiago to dinner! It is curious that Froissart should have made such a muddle of it, for he was at Foix in 1388, where there were eye-witnesses to question, and João Fernandes Pacheco, who told him about it at Middleburgh a few years later, was in a position to know." Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 321 n.

<sup>5</sup> It may be mentioned (though of course the *argumentum ex silentio* has only corroboratory value in such a case) that Clifford's name does not occur in the lists of those to whom letters of protection were issued in connection with the expedition. See Rymer, VII, 490-91, 499-501, 508; *Cal. Pat. Rolls. Rich. II*, 1385-89, pp. 139, 160, 164, 191-93, 198, 209, 213, 250, 276, 309.



has already called attention to the fact that at that time Sir Thomas Clifford, son of Roger Lord Clifford, challenged Boucicault the younger to certain feats of arms.<sup>1</sup> It was with this same Sir Thomas Clifford, probably a near kinsman, that Sir Lewis Clifford had helped to hold Carlisle against the French the previous autumn,<sup>2</sup> and that he should have accompanied the challenging knight to France is not an unreasonable conjecture. The tourney took place at Calais, before William de Beauchamp,<sup>3</sup> and who constituted the party of Boucicault we are not told. The incident, however, is of value as showing that during the early part of 1386 such communication was for the time restored between England and France as might readily afford occasion, whether at the hands of Clifford or of some one else, for the passage of the poem across the channel.

But there the opportunities seem sharply to break off. The formidable preparations at l'Écluse for the French invasion of England;<sup>4</sup> the terror of the Londoners, who, "timidi velut lepores, meticulosi ut mures, requirunt hinc inde divortia, perscrutantur latebras;"<sup>5</sup> the counter preparations on the part of England<sup>6</sup>—put further amenities out of the question for months to come. Deschamps appears as an uncompromising enemy of England, and an enthusiastic advocate of the proposed invasion :

Passons la mer, ou, j'apperçoy trop bien,  
Sanz paix avoir, nous aurons guerre, guerre.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Philology*, I, 11; Rymer, VII, 526; *Livre des Faicts du bon Mesire Jean le Maingre, dit Boucicault*, Pt. I, Ch. XIV (*Collec. des Memoires*, ed. Pettitot, XVI, pp. 413-16; *Memoires*, ed. Michaud and Ponjoulat, II, 226).

<sup>2</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, II, 75 (29 Oct., 1385) and *passim*; *Cal. Pat. Rolls. Rich. II*, 1381-85, pp. 518 (26 Jan., 1385), 527 (16 Dec., 1384).

<sup>3</sup> *Livres des Faicts*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> See Wallon, *op. cit.*, I, 280 ff. and references.

<sup>5</sup> Walsingham, *Hist. Angl.*, II, 145, cf. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Wallon, *op. cit.*, I, 287 ff.

<sup>7</sup> No. 48 (I, 136-37); cf. *Oeuvres*, XI, 50.

The "terre Angelique" of the Chaucer *balade* is given a characteristic turn :

Las ! toy, terre gouvernée d'enfans !  
 Visaige d'ange portez ; mais la pensée  
 De diable est en vous toudis sortissans . . . .  
 Destruiz serez, Grec diront et Latin :  
 Ou temps jadis estoit ci Angleterre.<sup>1</sup>

The poet prepares, with mingled feelings, to accompany the expected invasion :

L'yver est grant, la mer est ample,  
 Les vens sont grief,

he exclaims.<sup>2</sup> And so :

Adieu la terre ou l'en puet reposer,  
 Douce eaue aussy, adieu !<sup>3</sup>

But the dominant note is that of the *balade* on the Prophecy of Merlin :

Selon de Brut de l'isle des Geans  
 Qui depuis fut Albions appelée,  
 Peuple maudit, tardis en Dieu creans,  
 Sera l'isle de tous poins desolée ;<sup>4</sup>

to which is joined vehement counsel to avoid delay :

Princes, passez sanz point de demourée :  
 Vostres sera le pays d'Angleterre ;  
 Autre fois l'a un Normant conquestée :  
 Vaillant cuer puet en tous temps faire guerre.<sup>5</sup>

This mood seems to have lasted until the shameful *fiasco* in December of 1386, when the French fleet turned back ; whereupon Deschamps's ready invectives were launched

<sup>1</sup> No. 211 (II, 33-34) ; cf. *Oeuvres*, XI, 50, 98, n. 1. See the other *balades* on the same theme referred to in Vol. XI, 49 ff.

<sup>2</sup> No. 1060 (V, 351-52).

<sup>3</sup> No. 798 (IV, 309).

<sup>4</sup> No. 211 (II, 33).

<sup>5</sup> No. 1145 (VI, 73-74), quoted by Raynaud in *Oeuvres*, XI, 50-51. See the other references there given.

against the "Lasches, couars, recreans et faillis"<sup>1</sup> of his own country as well.

Into the details beyond this point it seems unnecessary to go. Suffice it to say that the hostilities continued until early in the year 1389, when, on June 18th, a truce was concluded between England and France and their allies until August 16th, 1392.<sup>2</sup> After that there are of course opportunities in abundance for communication through Clifford between Deschamps and Chaucer: the tournament of Saint-Ingelvert, where Clifford jousted March 21, 1389/90;<sup>3</sup> the Barbary expedition of the same year, in which Clifford was associated with the circle of Deschamps's acquaintances;<sup>4</sup> the mission to Paris early in 1391;<sup>5</sup> and finally the one occasion where there is positive documentary evidence that Deschamps and Clifford were together, the negotiations for peace in April, 1393.<sup>6</sup> What conclusion, then, may we

<sup>1</sup>No. 180 (I, 315-16); cf. especially *Oeuvres*, xi, 51 for the personal attack on Deschamps for his freedom of speech, and cf. his own bitter complaint in No. 772 (iv, 270); cf. No. 773.

<sup>2</sup>Rymer, vii, 622 fl., esp. 626.

<sup>3</sup>See Kittredge, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11 for references, and add *Livre des Faicts*, Pt. I, Ch. xvii, and the interesting *Joutes de Saint-Ingelbert, Poème contemporain*, in *Partie inédite des Chroniques de Saint-Denis*, ed. Pichon (Paris, 1864), especially pp. 69-70.

<sup>4</sup>Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Clifford seems to have returned to England after the tournament, which lasted thirty days, for Froissart (ed. Kervyn, xiv, 150-51) speaks of the Englishmen as all returning together. The Earl of Derby was at Calais from May 9th to May 31st, with the intention (later changed) of joining the expedition (Toulmin-Smith, *Derby Accounts*, p. xxxix), and Clifford was picked up at Calais (Cabaret, *Chron. du bon Duc Loys de Bourbon*, ed. Chazaud, p. 222). The expedition started back at the end of September, 1390 (Delaville le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, I, 194). In April, 1390, and again at the close of the same year, then, we know Clifford to have passed from France to England.

<sup>5</sup>Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 10, and references.

<sup>6</sup>The *Complaint de l'Eglise* (vii, 293-311) is dated by Deschamps April 13, 1393, and the Epilogue reads: Ceste epistre fist et compila Eustace des Champs, dit Morel, au traictié de la paix des .II. rois de France et de Angleterre, estans pour lors a Lolinghem, etc. From Rymer, vii, 738-39 we know that Clifford was one of the English commissioners.

draw from this long and somewhat dreary rehearsal of the facts?

Were nothing else involved, the period beginning with the Saint-Inglevert tourney might well be regarded as offering the most favorable opportunity for the despatch of the *balade* and its accompanying poems from Deschamps to Chaucer. Two considerations, however, run counter to this conclusion. In the first place, we have seen<sup>1</sup> that in all probability Deschamps knew of Chaucer as early as the autumn of 1384, an inference which, taken in connection with the otherwise curious fact that the *balade* seems to show acquaintance only with the translation of the *Romance of the Rose* among Chaucer's works, renders so late a date as 1390 or thereafter very unlikely. But it is far more important to note, in the second place, that, whether knowledge of the *Lay de Franchise* reached Chaucer through Clifford or through some other source, the B-version of the Prologue was, as we may safely infer both from general considerations and from its special relation to the *Book of Cupid*,<sup>2</sup> written some little time before the date of Sir John Clanvowe's departure on the Barbary expedition, in the spring of 1390. We are compelled, therefore, practically to throw out of court the period of the three years' truce as affecting the problem at all.

That leaves us, accordingly, the fact that for almost a year after the precise day for which the *Lay de Franchise* was written England and France were literally at sword's points, with Deschamps and Clifford during part of the time engaged in the actual hostilities, and with no reasonable opportunity of any sort seeming to present itself for knowledge of such a poem as the *Lay* to cross to England. Early in 1386 such an opportunity does seem to have arisen, during renewed

<sup>1</sup> See p. 760.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 754.

negotiations for peace; immediately thereafter the preparations for the French invasion and Deschamps's anti-English crusade put it out of the question again for at least the remainder of the year, and hostilities continue until the truce of Leulingham. All the evidence, therefore, seems to point to the late spring or the summer of 1386 as the earliest possible date for the composition of the B-version of the Prologue. And it may also be said that whatever opportunity for communication there may have been in the following year (upon which the records apparently throw no light) none seems probable *after* the spring or summer of 1386 for at least the remainder of that year. Accepting, then, the spring, or more probably the summer or autumn of 1386<sup>1</sup> as a provisional date for the B-version of the Prologue, how does it relate itself to the other considerations involved?

Its most important bearings will be discussed in a later section of this paper. Here, however, two other attempts that have been made on different grounds to determine the date of B. must be considered. The first depends on a bit of evidence which brings into the problem a most tantalizing touch of human interest. Where was Chaucer actually living when the Prologue was composed, and does he perhaps in it, with something of the pride of new possession, allude to a house more to his taste than the one where for the twelve years previous he had lived, upon the city wall? In the *Academy* for December 6th, 1879, Professor J. W. Hales called attention to the fact that Chaucer's house in Aldgate—"totam mansionem supra portam de Algate"<sup>2</sup>—which had been leased to him in May, 1374, was granted by the corporation in October, 1386,<sup>3</sup> to one Richard Foster,

<sup>1</sup> One needs to guard one's self against the fallacy of supposing that spring poems are necessarily composed in the spring!

<sup>2</sup> *Life Records*, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, *loc. cit.* The exact date of the lease was 5th October, 1386. There is no actual record of the surrender. The lease was delivered on 6th November. See *Life Records*, pp. xxxiv, 264.

“possibly identical with the ‘Richard Forrester’ who was one of Chaucer’s proxies when he went abroad for a time in May, 1378. . . . *The Legend of Good Women*,” Professor Hales goes on, “was written after he had moved away, probably very shortly afterwards, *likely enough in the spring or summer of 1386*;<sup>1</sup> for, probably enough, he ceased to reside in the Gate-house a little time before he ceased to be the lessee. . . . Anyhow—and the remark may be of use towards settling the date of it—the house he mentions in *The Legend* can scarcely have been his tower in Aldgate.” Professor Hales then quotes ll. 197–207 of the B-version of the Prologue, referring to the “litel herber that I have,” in connection with the mention of “myn hous.” Professor Skeat<sup>2</sup> also agrees that the remarks about ‘myn hous’ “are inconsistent with the position of a house above a city-gate,” but in order to avoid the conflict between this fact and the date to which he has assigned the composition of the Prologue suggests that “if, as is probable, they [*i. e.*, the remarks about ‘myn hous’] have reference to facts, we may suppose that [Chaucer] had already practically resigned his house to his friend in 1385, when he was no longer expected to perform his official duties personally.” Professor Hales, on the other hand, had suggested as Chaucer’s motive for leaving the house the fact that “his parliamentary duties called for his frequent presence in Westminster”—an explanation on the whole more probable than that he should have actually vacated his house over a year and a half before the lease was transferred. The writ for the election of the two knights of the shire for Kent is dated August 8, 1386,<sup>3</sup> and Parliament assembled October 1st. The surrender of Chaucer’s lease in August, then, would certainly be natural

<sup>1</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford Chaucer*, I, xxxviii.

<sup>3</sup> *Life Records*, p. 261.

enough. One may even surmise that the duties involved in his full commission, dated June 28, 1386, as Justice of the Peace for Kent<sup>1</sup> may possibly have been such as to render a change of residence advisable. At all events, the detail is an extremely interesting one, and *if* Chaucer was in fact referring to his own house, it seems rather to corroborate the date for the composition of B. here arrived at on grounds entirely different from those of Professor Hales. The lion in the way is, of course, one's grave doubt whether here, as in the daisy-passage itself, Chaucer may not be giving his usual verisimilitude to a poetic fancy, for one cannot feel sure that the "olde bokes" even this time are "a-weye," and the *if* before one's premises must be writ large.

A very elaborate argument for 1385 and 1390 as the dates of A. and B. respectively, has been constructed by Mr. Bilderbeck<sup>2</sup>—an argument which, despite one's profound respect for the scholarly and always suggestive work of its author, rests on premises which seem to be not only untenable in themselves but even more unfortunate in their implications. The argument is based on the lines<sup>3</sup> in which Alcestis urges the god of Love to leave his ire and be "somewhat trefable." "There can be no doubt," Mr. Bilderbeck assures us, "that, in the lecture on the duties of a king which Chaucer puts into the mouth of Alcestis, he is taking advantage of Queen Anne's well-known influence with the king, in order to convey to him, through her, a warning or a remonstrance against proceedings on his part which were calculated to endanger his safety and the peace of the kingdom."<sup>4</sup> To the lines in question, Mr. Bilderbeck

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, pp. xxxiii, 259. Chaucer had been an "associate" Justice since 12 Oct., 1385 (*ib.*, pp. xxxiii, 254).

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Bilderbeck, *Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (London, 1902), pp. 93 ff.

<sup>3</sup> A. 353-375 = B. 373-389.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

submits, "it is impossible to concede appositeness. What has the God of Love got to do with the distinctions between rich and poor, or the advancement in rank of his lords? Why should Love, to whom the gods themselves are sometimes subject, be afraid of any *half-goddys*? The arguments and appeals in the . . . passage have been dragged in to the violation of the fitness of things, in respect either to the character of the God of Love or to the circumstances of the fable out of which these arguments and appeals arise."<sup>1</sup> But has not the critic in this case, one is constrained to ask, in his zeal for the acquisition of chronological data been somewhat blinded to obvious artistic considerations? For one is forced to protest that the passage, with its arguments and appeals, is *not* "dragged in." On the contrary it is consistent with itself and with what precedes and follows it. For the sum of Alcestis's appeal at this point is simply *noblesse oblige*. It is his subject, his *vassal*, with whom the god of Love (Alcestis reminds him) is dealing—he must remember that; it is one of his people, to whom benignity is due:<sup>2</sup>

A king to kepe his *liges* in justyce ;  
With-outen doute, that is his offyce.<sup>3</sup>

True, it is also right and reasonable that he respect the claims of his *lords*; but it is of greater moment that

This shal he doon, *bothe to pore* [and] *riche*,  
Al be that her estat he nat a-liche,  
*And ham of pore folk compassioun*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> I am using the A-version at this point, since it is the one from which Bilderbeck argues.

<sup>3</sup> A. 366-67.

<sup>4</sup> A. 374-76. The subordination of the reference to the lords is still more distinct in B., through the "al . . . . yit" of ll. 384, 388.



This last line, which contains the conclusion of the whole matter, Bilderbeck entirely overlooks, closing his quotation with a period at line 375. What follows—the concrete illustration of the lion and the fly—is also left out of account, so that the very essence of Alcestis's appeal, its stress on the low degree of the culprit and the consequent obligation to mercy in the "noble corage" of the one whom he has offended, is disregarded, and emphasis laid on a subordinate point. What the god of Love "has . . . to do with the distinction between rich and poor," then, is to recognize that "of his gentye, Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye." That is the very gist of Alcestis's plea. Nor is there question in the lines of his being "afraid of any *half-goddys*," as Bilderbeck implies. His lords too have their rights, Alcestis points out; it is reasonable that they be "enhaunced and honoured and most dere" (for have not the half-gods claims of rank and kinship alike?), but this man's claim rests on the very fact that he is *not* a lord. The premise on which the whole argument of Bilderbeck depends seems admissible only if one reads the lines in the light of a preconceived theory.

"Chaucer's lecture on the duties and responsibilities of a king,"<sup>1</sup> in A., Bilderbeck assigns to 1385, because in that year Chaucer could still "convey to the king a strong and *timely* hint of the dangers that might attend a blind and unqualified adhesion to the policy which he seemed disposed to pursue."<sup>2</sup> That policy was, in the words Bilderbeck quotes from Stubbs,<sup>3</sup> "to raise up a counterpoise to [his uncles] by promoting and enriching servants of his own," and it was the ennobling of de la Pole, "created Earl of Suffolk on August 6th, 1385,"<sup>4</sup> and the fact that "in the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> Bilderbeck himself calls attention two pages earlier to the fact that on the same day on which de la Pole was created Earl of Suffolk the king likewise created his uncles Edward and Thomas Duke of York and Duke of Gloucester respectively!

same year . . . . John of Gaunt fortified himself against arrest in his castle at Pontefract," which "perhaps inspired the poet's recommendation that the king should 'kepe his lordys hir degre;' that they should be 'enhausenede and honoured' as 'half-goddys;' and that he should—

Nat ryghtfully his yre wreke  
Or he haue herd the tother party speke."<sup>1</sup>

But is not all that, like the other, entirely beside the point? The god of Love, like a petulant boy, has begun with a contemptuous reference to a worm as more welcome in his presence than the poet,<sup>2</sup> and has ended with a threat in which he so far forgets his dignity as to include the offender for a second time among old fools.<sup>3</sup> With a touch worthy of the *Nun's Priest's Tale* Chaucer allows Alcestis (whose sense of humor has not always descended to her commentators) to fall into mock heroic vein; over against the figure of the captious god of Love, in a pet because a poet has translated despite of love from old clerks, are all at once set the redoubtable "tiraunts of Lombardye That usen wilfulhed and tiraunye." The thing is masterly; it is Chaucer through and through.<sup>4</sup> And instead of its delicately

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> I am still using the A-version, from which Bilderbeck argues.

<sup>3</sup> The sly humor of Alcestis's opening words: "god, *right of your courtesye*" is one of Chaucer's most delicious touches. Though, indeed, on the hypothesis under discussion one is at a loss to know precisely where to draw the line. May not Alcestis, who is Queen Anne, be gently reading the god of Love, who is King Richard, a "lecture" on kingly restraint of speech? For Richard, if one may believe the chroniclers, often availed himself in right regal fashion of his prerogatives as "lord of this langage!"

<sup>4</sup> Nothing, indeed, could be more characteristic than the evident zest with which the figure of Love as a pettish and captious young person is drawn; and precisely the tyranny which Alcestis deprecates is animadverted on by Theseus (A. 1623-26), by Pandare (*Troilus*, I, 904-40), and, not to name others, by Chaucer in his own person:

For al be that I knowe not love in dede,  
Ne wot how that he quytech folk hir hyre,

humorous incongruity<sup>1</sup> we are asked to accept "a lecture on the duties of a king, expressed in tones at once earnest and solemn," which Chaucer with fine tact puts into the mouth of the Queen herself, who thus is made to remind her husband that

Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,  
As is a fermour, to doon the harm he can!

In a word, where the plan and structure of the poem itself, considered as the work of art which Chaucer indubitably supposed he was engaged on, adequately account for the imagined references to matters without its scope,<sup>2</sup> the princi-

Yet happeth me ful ofte in bokes rede  
Of his miracles, and his cruel yre ;  
Ther rede I wel he wol be lord and syre,  
I dar not seyn, his strokes been so sore,  
But god save swich a lord ! I can no more.

(*Parl. of Foules*, ll. 8-14. Cf. ll. 1-7 ; *Merciles Beaute*, ll. 27-39 ; *Envoy to Scogan*, ll. 22-28 ; etc. ).

<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note that Legouis (see below, p. 787, n. 1) recognized a similar humorous incongruity in another connection. Speaking of Amour's references "aux bons auteurs" in his long speech in A. 268 ff., he writes : "Quelque comique naissait sans doute de la discordance qu'il y avait entre sa jolie figure et son lourd étalage d'erudition" (p. 9). This is, however, he thinks, to the detriment, even to the ruin, of a Prologue till then all grace and all poetic charm.

<sup>2</sup>There is a seemingly valid distinction to be made between the *Parlement of Foules* and the Prologue, which is possibly of some importance in its bearing on the subject under discussion. In the *Parlement*, in the very nature of the case, one is forced to go outside the poem itself for any significance it may have over and above the ostensible picture it gives of the parliament of the birds. That *prima facie* significance does not in and for itself justify its elaboration in the poem ; one instinctively looks outside it for its real occasion. In the Prologue, on the other hand, the allegory is in itself "*totus, teres atque rotundus*." Every detail can be adequately accounted for by reference to the three central figures in precisely the characters they purport to have. The burden of proof rests wholly upon those who import an ulterior significance. The two poems, in other words, belong to distinct types, and to argue from one to another involves an initial fallacy.

ple of economy itself renders such references extremely doubtful. And when the acceptance of them involves a lecture with a sting in its tail,<sup>1</sup> "breathing," also, "a spirit of concern and anxiety,"<sup>2</sup> delivered—of all men!—by Geoffrey Chaucer to his sovereign, the respect emphatically gives us pause.<sup>3</sup> It is not—be it distinctly said—

<sup>1</sup> Bilderbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> The uncertainties incident to such a method of interpretation as Bilderbeck's may be shown in another way. For independent reasons one has arrived at the summer or autumn of 1386 as a probable date for the composition of B. One turns to Knighton and finds that in the autumn of 1386 the Parliament (of which Chaucer was then a member) sent to King Richard as envoys the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Ely, who were to inform the King, among other things, that it was his duty to summon a parliament once a year, "tanquam ad summam curiam totius regni, in qua omnis aequitas relucere deberet absque qualibet scrupulositate vel nota, tanquam sol in ascensu meridiei, ubi pauperes et divites pro refrigerio tranquillitatis et pacis et repulsione injuriarum refrigerium infallibile quaerere possent," etc. (Knighton, II, 217). There at once is Chaucer's "right to pore and riche." Moreover, the envoys also called attention to the fact that "si rex . . . nec voluerit per jura regni et statuta ac laudibiles ordinationes cum salubri consilio dominorum et procerum regni gubernari et regulari, sed capite in suis insanis consiliis propriam voluntatem suam singularem proterve exercere, extunc licitum est eis . . . regem de regali solio abrogare," etc. (Knighton, II, 219). There is also the "keeping his lords hir degre;" there is the "tyrannye"—to say nothing of the striking parallel in the whole situation as Knighton gives it. One might, accordingly, with the utmost plausibility argue that in the autumn of 1386 Chaucer, himself a Member of Parliament, was in the B-version voicing as a friend the admonition which he feared would come in sterner form from the king's enemies, whose temper he had ample opportunity to know.

One recalls, moreover, that there are in A. five lines which Bilderbeck, with his theory of 1385 as the date of that version, overlooks, although if any lines in the poem seem to have specific contemporary reference it is they :

And that him oweth, of verray duetee,  
Shewen his peple pleyn benignitee,  
And wel to here hir excusaciouns,  
And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,  
In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre

(A. 360-64).

that one absurdly denies the possibility of Chaucer's indulging in references to contemporary events.<sup>1</sup> The contention is simply that such supposed references must first of all be judged as integral parts of a work of art, and that, furthermore, the characteristics of the poet himself, so far as one may gather them from his other works, must enter into the estimate.

There seems, then, to be in the opposing arguments examined no valid reason for abandoning the date proposed for the composition of B.—a date not earlier than the late spring or even the summer of 1386.

These lines do not occur in B. One will recall further that on August 29, 1393, Richard visited London to be publicly reconciled with the citizens—an occasion celebrated in a famous Latin poem by Richard de Maidstone (Wright, *Political Poems*, Rolls Series, 1, 282-300), in which Richard literally heard the "excusaciouns" of his people, and at the "*supplicatio reginae pro eisdem civibus*" did show them "pleyn benignitee." But, in the very article of ten Brink whose argument Bilderbeck is attempting to refute, it will be remembered that ten Brink suggested for A. the possibility of a date scarcely before 1393, or possibly in 1394. Applying Bilderbeck's own principle of interpretation, then, one finds in A. what seems to be an almost startling reference to an event at the close of 1393. (To Legouis, on the other hand, the scene recalls something else: "Elle fait penser à l'intercession de la bonne reine Philippine de Hainaut en faveur des pauvres bourgeois de Calais voués à la mort par Edouard III. Plusieurs traits renforcent cette impression: la colère du dieu calmée par Alceste; l'allusion au pénitent qui implore merci et s'offre 'in his bare sherte,' etc." (*op. cit.*, p. 18). That was in 1347! The riches of the allusion are somewhat embarrassing). In other words, one may readily find in the supposed references to contemporary events equally strong arguments (I should myself be inclined to say much stronger ones) for referring B. and A. respectively to 1386 and 1394, as for Bilderbeck's suggestion of 1385 and 1390 respectively for A. and B. Bilderbeck's argument proves too much.

<sup>1</sup>That Chaucer's phraseology is possibly, even probably, here and there more or less reminiscent of the general situation in England for a period extending over several years (precisely as the phrase "tyraunts of Lombardy" is reminiscent of well-known foreign affairs) one may readily admit. But that is a very different thing indeed from the claim that the whole situation of the poem is to be *identified* with the situation at the English court.

## II.

Is it possible, now, to determine the date of A? Any attempt to do so must manifestly take first into account the couplet of B. in which the *Legend* is dedicated to the Queen:

And whan this book is maad, yive hit the quene  
On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene.<sup>1</sup>

This is the one direct, explicit, unmistakable reference in the poem to the Queen, and in A. it is omitted. Why? Ten Brink suggested two possible reasons: "Als Chaucer seinen prolog umarbeitete, war entweder sein verhältniss zu den majestäten ein derartiges, dass es ihm gerathen schien, eine zu deutliche anspielung auf früher genossene gnade zu unterdrücken, oder aber die königen Anna († 7. Juni, 1394) war damals schon nicht mehr am leben."<sup>2</sup> The first reason, it must be confessed, seems little short of incredible.<sup>3</sup> That an English gentleman should deliberately recall a dedication to his Queen because he did not stand so high in royal favor as in earlier days would be hard in any instance to believe;<sup>4</sup> the possibility that Chaucer himself should commit so gross a breach of courtesy one may dismiss without hesitation. That leaves ten Brink's second suggestion, which under ordinary circumstances would seem little more probable than the first, inasmuch as a poem dedicated in her lifetime to the Queen would naturally enough remain after her death a tribute to her memory. But a peculiar circum-

<sup>1</sup> B. 496-97.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, xvii, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Both Koch (*Chronology*, p. 85) and Bilderbeck (*op. cit.*, p. 81) call attention to the improbability of such a reason for the excision of the couplet, but both overlook entirely the fact that ten Brink had offered an alternative suggestion.

<sup>4</sup> Gower's change in the dedication of the *Confessio Amantis* is not, as Bilderbeck with right points out (*op. cit.*, p. 81), a case in point.

stance already referred to<sup>1</sup> renders it highly probable that—granted for the moment the existence at the time of the Queen's death of a well-known poem dedicated to her, with the addition of an explicit reference to Shene—the dedication *would* in the particular case of Queen Anne be cancelled after her death. For we read in Stow: "The seuenth of June Queene Anne dyed at Shine in Southery, and was buryed at Westminst. The king tooke her death so heuilly, that besides cursing the place where shee dyed, hee did also for anger throwe downe the buildings unto the which the former kinges beeing wearyed of the Citee, were wont for pleasure to resort."<sup>2</sup> That a recognition of the grief which led the half-crazed king to tear down the manor house at Shene in which the Queen had died, should dictate the removal from a familiar poem of the lines which, associating the living Queen with that very house, must have recalled too painfully the happier days, is a supposition which gives an entirely adequate and vividly human motive for a change otherwise almost inexplicable. If, then, there should be found independent evidence which points in general to a somewhat late date for the version, we shall probably be justified in placing not long after the middle of 1394 the revision resulting in A.<sup>3</sup> And other grounds

<sup>1</sup> See *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 671, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales* (1615), p. 308; cf. the Monk of Evesham, *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi II* (ed. Hearne), p. 125. Reference is made to the incident in another connection by Bilderbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Koepfel's suggestion regarding the revision of the Prologue—"dass sie nämlich als ein missglückter versuch Chaucer's zu betrachten ist, auch den prolog und einige der legenden für das hauptwerk seiner letzten periode, für die Canterbury-geschichten zu erwerten (*Eng. Stud.*, XXX, 467; reiterated in *Literaturblatt*, 1893, p. 51)—rests solely upon the supposed implications of the phrase "or I fro yow fare" of A. 85, which is, however, a simple narrative commonplace, with no hint whatever of actually riding away from one's company.

for supposing that A. does represent Chaucer's later work may indeed be pointed out.<sup>1</sup>

One such piece of evidence seems to be afforded by the passages in A. which refer to Chaucer's age.<sup>2</sup> Regarding these references the first point to be considered is the question of fact. What, in a word, actually constituted old age in Chaucer's day? The prime essential to an understanding is to divest one's mind entirely of modern preconceptions in the case. "We must" as Professor Skeat has said in

<sup>1</sup> It is also worth noting that on July 12th, 1394, Froissart, after twenty-seven years' absence, landed in England, led by an overmastering desire to see the country once more. With him he brought, as he says, a book to present to the King: "Et avoie de pourvéance fait escripre, grosser et enluminer et fait recueillier tous les traittiés amoureux et de moralité que ou terme de xxxiiii ans je avoie par le grâce de Dieu et d'amours fais et compilés" (ed. Kervyn, xv, 141). After trying in vain to obtain audience with the King at Canterbury, whither Richard had come to make his pilgrimage on his return from Ireland, and after several rather pathetic disappointments, he found at last at Eltham his own and Chaucer's old friend Sir Richard Stury, with whom he talked much, "en gambiant les galleries de l'ostel à Eltem où il faisoit moult bel et moult plaisant et umbru, car icelles galleries pour lors estoient toutes couvertes de vignes." Through Sir Richard Stury the old chronicler and poet was at last informed that the King was anxious to see his book. "Si le vey en sa chambre, car tout pourveu je l'avoie, et luy mis sur son lit. Il l'ouvry et regarda ens, et luy pleut très-grandement et bien plaie luy devoit, car il estoit enluminé, escript et historié et couvert de vermeil velours à dix clous attachiés d'argent dorés et roses d'or ou milieu, a deux grans frumans dorés et richement ouvrés ou milieu de roses d'or. Adont me demanda le roy de quoy il traittoit. Je luy dis: 'D'amours.'" How the king was greatly pleased with this reply, and how he had the book carried to his "chambre de retraite," Froissart goes on to tell (ed. Kervyn, xv, 167). Is it not at least possible that Chaucer, hearing through their common friend of the return of this one of his old "lovers that can make of sentement" and of the gift to the King of the volume, part of which he knew so well, may have thus had called to his mind with double force the earlier poem? It is only a possibility, but it seems worthy of a moment's entertainment.

<sup>2</sup> A. 258-63, 315, 400-401.



another connection,<sup>1</sup> "if we really wish to ascertain the truth without prejudice, try to bear in mind the fact that, in the fourteenth century, men were deemed old at an age which we should now esteem as almost young." Few more striking statements of this mediæval point of view could well be found than those in Deschamps. Pope Innocent III, commenting in the *De Contemptu Mundi* on the Psalmist's limit of seventy years, had said: "Pauci nunc ad .xl., paucissimi ad .lx. annos perveniunt."<sup>2</sup> On this limit of sixty years Deschamps bases the thirteenth section of his *Double Lay de la Fragilité humaine*—"De la Briefté de l'Age:"<sup>3</sup>

A bien vous amesurez,  
Que .lx. ans ne durez,  
—Pou passent oultre le sueil—  
Dont vint ans mescognoissiez,  
Dix ans vous esjouissiez,  
Dix ans dittes: "L'avoir cueil,"  
Dix ans dittes: "Je me dueil,"  
Dix ans estes rassotez  
Et moins qu'enfans devenez,  
Qu'on couche en un bersueil.

This surrender to old age of the two decades from forty to sixty one finds over and over again in Deschamps.<sup>4</sup> Espe-

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford Chaucer*, I, xvi. To the instances there given add those on p. 86 of the same volume, and compare Vollmer, *The Boko of Cupide*, p. 55. See, too, Lounsbury's discussion (*Studies*, I, 48 ff.) of the statement in the *Pricke of Conscience* (ll. 764-65) that

Fone men may now fourty yhere pas,  
And foner fifty, als it somtym was.

<sup>2</sup> See *Oeuvres de Deschamps*, II, 265.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, II, 264.

<sup>4</sup> For this same division of the sixty years see Nos. 25 (I, 104), 321 (III, 14), 675 (IV, 134), 1450 (VIII, 135). The limit of sixty years is set, without division into decades, in Nos. 134 (I, 258), 198 (II, 17), 330 (III, 33), 565 (IV, 23). For part of these references I am indebted to Raynaud in *Oeuvres*, XI, 96, 146. One must not confuse this mediæval attitude with the later conventional device, on the part of youthful sonneteers, of feigning old age; cf. Sidney Lee, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 85, 86.

cially is the decade from fifty to sixty painted, as above, in gruesome colors :

Autres .x. aus languereux, orphenin,  
Vieulx, decrepiz ; mort nous met en sa fonde ;  
L'umeur deffault et nous chéent li crin.<sup>1</sup>

So, in balade No. 191<sup>2</sup> we are told that

Depuis c'uns homs a passé cinquante ans,  
Sanz lui armer se tiengne en sa maison,  
S'il a de quoy, ne voist plus par les champs ;  
De reposer doit querir sa saison,  
Vivre de sien, et user par raison  
Des biens acquis loyaument, et non prendre  
Les biens d'autrui, car c'est grant desraison :  
Bonne vie fait a bonne fin tendre.

Ce temps passé, devient chanuz et blans  
Par viellesce homs, s'a mainte passion,  
Doleur de chief, froidure, goute es flans ;  
De s'ame doit avoir compassion,  
Penser a Dieu, querir remission  
De ses pechiez, etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 321, ll. 33-35 (III, 15) ; cf. especially in the last stanza of No. 1450 (VIII, 136).

<sup>2</sup> II, 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 297 (II, 156). For a woman old age began much earlier. See, for example, in the "Lamentations d'une dame sur la perte de sa jeunesse," No. 535 (III, 373-74), such lines as the following :

Vint et cinq ans dura ma jeune fleurs,  
Mais a trente ans fu ma coulour muée.  
Lasse ! languir vois ou desert d'amours :  
*Car mon chief blond en cel eage trouway  
Blanc et merlé. . . .*  
Ha ! Viellesce, par toy sui effacée.

With this, which should be read entire for its full effect, one may compare the parallel passage in No. 305 (II, 187), ll. 165 ff. :

Qui m'a si tost amené  
Et donné  
*xxx. ans ?* Mon aage est finé  
De jeunesse ; ay cuit mon pain ;  
*Viellesce d'ui a demain*  
*S'a tout mon bon temps cassé.*

Nor is Deschamps merely painting an imaginary state of things. Under date of September 17, 1385, in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, for instance, is entered "exemption, for life, in consideration of his great age, of Gilbert Bouge, who is over 60, from being put on assizes, juries, attaints or recognizances," etc., etc.<sup>1</sup> So far, then, as the general boundaries of the period of old age in the fourteenth century are concerned, the case is a clear one.

Now it must be remembered that on Chaucer's own testimony in the Scrope-Grosvenor trial he was in October, 1386, "del age de xl ans et plus"<sup>2</sup>—a statement which has usually been assumed to imply the age of about forty-six.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the composition of the first version of the Prologue, accordingly, he had not yet reached the fatal decade from fifty to sixty; after 1390 he was within its limits. Nor are we without specific testimony on the point. For somewhere between the beginning of the year 1390, during which the earliest form of the *Confessio Amantis* was completed,<sup>4</sup> and the middle of June, 1391, when the new epilogue was substituted for the old,<sup>5</sup> appeared Gower's famous advice to Chaucer, put into the mouth of Venus at the close of the *Confessio* itself:

And gret wel Chaucer whan ye mete,  
As mi disciple and mi poete :  
For in the floures of his youthe  
In sondri wise, as he wel couthe,  
Of Ditees and of songes glade,

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. Pat. Rolls Rich.* II, 1385-89, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Scrope-Grosvenor Roll*, I, 178; *Life Records*, p. 265, cf. xiii; cf. also Skeat, *Oxford Chaucer*, I, xxxvii.

<sup>3</sup> So Bond, in *Life Records*, p. 102; cf. Skeat, *Oxford Chaucer*, I, xv-xvi; Koch, *Chronology*, p. 2, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Macaulay, *The Works of John Gower*, II, xxi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, xxii. Professor Macaulay has shown the previous conjectures regarding the dates of composition and revision to be worthless.

The whiche he for mi sake made,  
 The lond fulfild is overal :  
 Wherof to him in special  
 Above alle othre I am most holde.  
*For thi now in hise daies olde*  
 Thow schalt him telle this message,  
*That he upon his latere age,*  
*To sette an ende of alle his werk,*  
 As he which is myn owne clerk,  
 Do make his testament of love,  
 As thou hast do thi schrifte above,  
 So that mi Court it mai recorde.<sup>1</sup>

Gower's lines, accordingly, at least make clear the appositeness of references to Chaucer's advancing age in 1390 or later. So much for the facts.

As for the interpretation thereof, the best authority would doubtless be Chaucer himself, could he but be fairly called into court. And something not far from that seems to be really possible. Ten Brink years ago referred to the *Envoy to Scogan* as indicating that "der dichter etwa seit dem jahre 1393 dieses thema ohne scheu . . . berührt."<sup>2</sup> He did not, however, call attention to what is even more significant—the fact, namely, that Chaucer's reference to his age in the *Envoy* is, as in the A-version of the Prologue, connected with an offense against the god of Love, and expresses in Chaucer's own person the same humorous recognition of Cupid's contempt for "alle hem that ben hore and rounde of shape" which in A. is put, in the stronger terms demanded by the dramatic situation, into the mouth of the god of Love himself. That is to say, in a poem which we can almost certainly place late in 1393 we find such a reference to Chaucer's age as is not only in keeping with the general mediæval acceptance of its limits, but also in striking accord with the A-version of the Pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Works* (ed. Macaulay), III, 466 (Bk. VIII, ll. 2941\*–2957\*).

<sup>2</sup> *Englische Studien*, XVII, 14.

logue, which independent evidence has led us to date about the middle of 1394. The "old age passages" are, accordingly, to say the very least, not inconsistent with a date approximating that of the *Envoy to Scogan*.

Moreover, the reference to the "olde foles" heightens appreciably the *dramatic* quality of the Prologue. Regarding the absence from B. of this same mention of the poet's age Professor Legouis holds, it is true, "que le personnage d'Amour gagne à l'omission en consistance, et le prologue entier en poésie."<sup>1</sup> But as regards consistency, what is the fundamental note in the characterization of the god of Love? Even in B. is it sweet reasonableness? Suppose now that about 1394 Chaucer for some reason did come back to his earlier poem. What difference would his preoccupation meantime with the *Canterbury Tales*, so far as one may judge from their qualities, have made in his point of view? For one thing, he would cer-

<sup>1</sup>*Quel fut le premier composé par Chaucer des deux prologues de la Légende des Femmes Exemplaires?* (Le Havre, 1900.), p. 10. Through the courtesy both of Professor Legouis himself and also of Professor Kaluza, this important essay has been made accessible to me. One wishes it were possible to agree as heartily with the conclusions of Professor Legouis's extremely able paper, as with the fundamental principle it enunciates: "N'entendons pas par là qu'il [Chaucer] se soit préoccupé de fournir à ses futurs biographes un plus grand nombre de renseignements sur la vie et ses œuvres, mais qu'il a, en vrai poète, retouché le plan pour lui donner le plus de cohésion et d'harmonie possible; que, s'il a modifié des vers particuliers, c'est afin de les rendre plus clairs, plus expressifs et plus beaux" (p. 4). But the two alternatives which Professor Legouis states are those of a revision undertaken in the poet's decline (p. 4), which he rejects, and a revision which almost immediately followed the first composition (p. 18), which he accepts. This fails, however, to take into account a third possibility: namely, that the revision was undertaken at a period not of declining, but of heightened, powers—powers, however, whose direction and emphasis had meantime somewhat changed, so that from their exercise upon the earlier work there resulted a certain inevitable loss as well as a no less inevitable gain. For the present contention is not that the superiority of A. to B. holds absolutely at every point, but that A. bears unmistakable marks of a revision by a maturer, a firmer, a more sparing hand.

tainly have a stronger prepossession in favor of compactness of structure, and that, as we have already seen,<sup>1</sup> A. shows. But with equal certainty, I think, we may assume that to the man who had conceived the vivid contrasts of the Wife of Bath and the Clerk of Oxford, of Harry Bailly and the Prioress, of the "chanoun of religioun" and the London priest, the possibility of *dramatic contrasts* would be likely to make the first appeal. And the heightening of the contrast between the petulance and extravagance of the god of Love and the humorous tolerance and entire sweetness with which Alcestis, woman fashion, brings the offended deity to terms, is in perfect keeping with such a point of view. The lines themselves, too, besides accomplishing this, hit off delightfully Chaucer's own often boasted aloofness—the coolness of his wit—where there is question of loving *par amours*, while the sly malice of the god's suggestion of the true motive serves to give keener point to Alcestis's allusions to his cruelty. As for the loss in "poésie" one would have to define terms carefully before hazarding a reply. Thus much, however, seems pretty clear: that if by "poésie" one understands here the quality one feels in what Professor Legouis has himself aptly called "un Prologue [B] qui était jusqu'ici toute grâce et tout charme poétique,"<sup>2</sup> one must frankly admit that the other version does sometimes speak of something that is gone. But therein lies, perhaps, the strongest argument for the later date of the possibly less charming, less graceful, but certainly more compact, more dramatic, version. For where in the later *Tales* does one find the charming looseness of structure, the *abandon*, the lavish use of all the poet's wealth which one finds, let us say, in the *Parlement of Foules*? The fault of Legouis's admirable treatment of the problem is not that it attempts to

<sup>1</sup> *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xix, 658 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

judge the matter on purely artistic grounds, for that is its most welcome contribution to a discussion not wholly free from pedantry. It is, if one may venture the criticism, that it perhaps fails to recognize that an artist, *as an artist*, does not stand still;<sup>1</sup> that the same problem will be approached by him at different periods from different angles; and that, in a world where every gain finds loss to match, one is compelled to weigh not only the fact of losses but the significance of their character as well. Gains and losses alike, then, in the A-version of the Prologue seem to point to a period well on in Chaucer's poetic development.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Legouis does believe of Chaucer that "le génie poétique suivit un progrès constant jusque'au jour où la plume lui tomba des mains" (*op. cit.*, p. 4). But his view that the two Prologues fall in the same year, "très rapprochées" (see *ib.*, p. 18), prevents his application to the present problem of the principle involved.

<sup>2</sup>Bilderheck has offered the extremely interesting suggestion that Gower's message to Chaucer, already quoted, was the cause of the elimination, in 1390, of the "old age passages" in A. "Whether Chaucer took offense is an open question," he concludes, "but there can be little doubt that he recognized the *reductio ad absurdum* of the position in which Gower had placed him, and his recognition of this probably reinforced his determination to eliminate all references to old age which his artistic sense also condemned" (*op. cit.*, p. 106; cf. the fuller statements on pp. 105-6). If the lines in the Prologue have any direct connection with the passage at the close of the *Confessio*—something of which one may entertain no small doubt—is it not far more in keeping with Chaucer's character that they should have been *added*, in the spirit of the Canacee passage of the Man of Law's head-link, as a sly retort upon his friend? Venus's advice to Chaucer, it will be recalled, is that he

Do make his testament of love,  
As thou hast do thi schrifte above.

In other words, like Gower and for the same reason—namely, that

. . . . loves lust and lockes hore  
In chambre acorden neveremore,  
And thogh thou feigne a yong corage,  
It scheweth wel be the visage  
That olde grisel is no fole (2403-7)—

There is a further consideration, involving the translation of the *De Contemptu Mundi*, which seems to point to a date for the revision somewhere in the period of the *Canterbury Tales*. On the brink of the dismal arguments built up about the still more dismal treatise of Pope Innocent one lingers shivering. For the view that the translation "of the Wretched Engending of Mankinde, As man may in pope Innocent

Chaucer is exhorted to "made a plein reles To love" (see, for Gower's use of "testament," as above, in the sense of last will, *Confessio*, vii, 3860; *Praise of Peace*, 177). For Gower's *shrift*, which Chaucer is thus to supplement, is, as the priest's specific words make clear (2895-96), precisely his confession that he is "unbehovely Your Court fro this day forth to serve" (2884-85), and his prayer: "I preie you to ben excused" (2888). If one turn, now, to the A-version of the Prologue, one finds in the first threat of the god of Love the lines:

*Although [that] thou reneyed hast my lay,  
As othere olde foles many a day,  
Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shall be sene* (314-16),

to which Alcestis later replies, in a couplet that does not occur in B.:

Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat;  
*I not wher he be now a renegat* (400-401).

That is to say, the god of Love is characterizing, in the two lines italicized, precisely such an attitude as that of Gower ("olde foles" in A. having replaced "wreches han don" of B.); while Alcestis—in two lines which sum up, the first by affirmation, the second by implied denial, the two parts of the message of Venus to Chaucer, with its admission of early service (ll. 2943\*-49\*) and its implication that his day, for her, was done (ll. 2950\*-57\*)—refuses to admit its application to Chaucer. When one remembers, now, that in the Man of Law's head-link, in direct connection with a long and explicit reference to the *Legend* (B. 60-76), occurs what is generally conceded to be a good-natured fling at Gower (B. 77-89), the possibility in the case of the Prologue of a clever reference, in perfect good humor, to Gower's not altogether tactful assumption that Chaucer and he were in similar parlous case may perhaps be admitted. I confess to thinking any connection between the two poems extremely doubtful. If there be one, however, it is sufficiently ambiguous to warrant the contention that it points quite as much to the insertion as to the rejection of the "olde age passages" after 1390.



y-finde" belongs to Chaucer's later period there is, indeed, I am convinced, sufficient ground. But the specific reasons hitherto urged for this opinion by those who have argued for the late date of A., I find myself entirely unable to accept. For they rest upon what, rightly or wrongly, seems to me an altogether unwarranted assumption: namely, that when a poet's outward circumstances are adverse, this state of things will inevitably be reflected in his work. To mark out, accordingly, the ebb and flow of his fortunes; to classify his poems according as they are grave or gay; to ascribe the grave to the ebb, the gay to the flow—such is the neat formula which gives, it must be admitted, no less precise results. But it smacks of the scholar's pigeon-holes rather than of insight into life, and seems particularly to ignore the cardinal fact that it has to do with Geoffrey Chaucer. We are asked to believe with Koeppel<sup>1</sup> that as a result of Chaucer's unhappy circumstances after the close of 1386 he devoted himself to achieving intimate acquaintance not only with Pope Innocent's *Liber de vilitate conditionis humanae naturae*, but also with the *Treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins*, with the *Liber consolationis et consilii* of Albert of Brescia, and with St. Jerome, and that we enter upon "eine längere Periode dichterischer Erschöpfung, dichterischen Stillstandes." Ten Brink solemnly assures us that the straits in which Chaucer at this same time found himself were able "seine Lebenslust auf eine Weile [zu] dämpfen, auf kurze Zeit sogar den Humor von seiner Seite [zu] verscheuchen;" that "der weltfrohe Dichter fühlte sich zu ernster Betrachtung, zu erneuter Einkehr in seine innere Welt veranlasst; und für's erste mag seine Stimmung wiederum eine entschieden religiöse Färbung angenommen haben;"<sup>2</sup> and he connects the translation of the *De Contemptu* with the knowledge of poverty thus gained.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Literaturblatt*, 1893, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte*, II, 123-24.

<sup>3</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, xvii, 22.

That retirement to the solace of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, that banishment of even his sense of humor, that period of poetic exhaustion, because of a turn in his fortunes, we are expected to ascribe to the man who wrote of Fortune herself the ringing lines :

But natheles, the lak of her favour  
 Ne may nat don me singen, though I dye,  
 'Iay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour :'  
 For fynally, Fortune, I thee defye !—

the man who put in Fortune's own mouth the words :

No man is wrecched, but him-self hit wene,  
 And he that hath him-self hath suffisaunce.

What had *he* on earth to do' (one feels like asking in a fellow poet's, not a critic's, phrase) with the aimless, helpless, hopeless—being—Geoffrey Chaucer? Is it not far more in keeping with the character of the man who never wrote with more delicate humor than in the lines dispatched to Scogan from the "solitary wilderness" where he lay forgotten at the end of the stream,<sup>1</sup> to suppose that the enforced release from business, accompanied by poverty though it may have been, was welcomed as the long awaited opportunity to carry out larger plans? Surely Professor Skeat's view that "the years 1387 and 1388 were . . . the most active time of his poetical career"<sup>2</sup> is more likely to be in accordance with the facts.<sup>3</sup> At all events, whatever reasons there may be for placing the translation of the *De Contemptu Mundi* in

<sup>1</sup> Compare, too, the *Complaint to his Empty Purse*.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford Chaucer*, I, xxxix.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, on the whole, the best corrective to such conjectures as those of Koepfel and ten Brink would be to construct a theoretical chronology of the writings of Thomas Hood, based on the axiom that humor and prosperity go hand in hand, and humbly submit it to the castigation of the facts.

Chaucer's later period, the assumption of its semi-autobiographic character needs careful scrutiny.<sup>1</sup>

A far stronger argument for the late date of the translation appears by implication in ten Brink's discussion,<sup>2</sup> and rests on the distribution of the fragments of the treatise in Chaucer's own work. For, naturally enough, the question of Chaucer's motive in mentioning the treatise will not down. That it was his intention, as Koeppel has suggested, to complete up to date the catalogue of his works<sup>3</sup> seems scarcely probable. Believing it, as Koeppel does, to be so, his recourse to italics in what follows is readily intelligible: "*was hätte den dichter abhalten können, auch [die geschichte der Constanze] in die liste des prologs aufzunehmen?*"<sup>4</sup> What indeed? The obvious conclusion seems to be that Chaucer did *not* intend in A. to complete the catalogue of his works—particularly since he added only one! Why, then, should he have named that? An answer which at least tallies perfectly with what we know of Chaucer's practice in other instances is: Because he happened to have it fresh in mind—presumably from having been recently busied with it. But clearly he was also busied with it in some fashion when he wrote the *Man of Law's* head-link and the *Pardoner's Tale*, as well as when he wrote or modified the *Man of Law's Tale*—possibly also when the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* was composed.<sup>5</sup> That the various poems

<sup>1</sup> Koch likewise believes that Chaucer had given way to ascetic feelings when he made the translation, but, also believing A. to be the earlier version, he places the *Wretched Engendring* with the *Life of St. Cecily* in 1374 (*Chron.*, pp. 28–29, 78). It would of course be equally extreme to deny *in toto* the thesis that a writer's fortunes may be more or less reflected in his work. So wholesale a disclaimer would find its refutation in any one of a score of instances. What gives one pause is the confident erection into a general principle of a matter of individual temperament.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, xvii, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps one line of the *Monk's Tale* (B. 3199) is to be assigned here. It is interesting—in its bearing on ten Brink's theory that the original

which show in one way or another that the *De Contemptu* was in Chaucer's mind when they were written should belong to approximately the same general period, seems, if not certain, at least a natural and probable inference.<sup>1</sup>

But why, the question keeps intruding itself, should Chaucer have begun translating it at all? There is a possible answer which, so far as I know, has never been suggested, yet which has at least analogy in its favor. Chaucer's translation of whatever pious tract it be that, combining Raymund of Pennafort and Guilielmus Peraldus, underlies the *Parson's Tale*,<sup>2</sup> together with his translation of Albertano of Brescia's *Liber Consolationis*, find a place (the former in particular most aptly) in the *Canterbury Tales*. Is it not at least possible that Chaucer may have likewise intended his version of Pope Innocent for one of the Canterbury pilgrims? That is perhaps more likely than that it was an act of personal mortification on Chaucer's part—though indeed that he had found the translation of

*Palamon and Arcite* was in 7-line stanzas, because the fragments of the *Teseide* in the *Parlement* and the *Troilus* so appear—to observe that the fragments of the *De Contemptu* are in 7-line stanzas (in the Man of Law's Prologue and *Tale*) and decasyllabic couplets (in the *Pardoner's Tale*), while the original version was in prose! In other words, the material is given the metre of the poem in which it happens to be inserted, without reference to its original form. That, indeed, is what common sense would lead one to suppose, were common sense always allowed to influence the consideration of such problems. Even more to the point is it to observe that on ten Brink's hypothesis the lines from the *Filostrato* in the Prologue to the *Legend* would force us to the acceptance of a proto-*Troilus* in decasyllabic couplets.

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed, moreover, that the *Pardoner's Tale* and the Wife of Bath's Prologue are linked with the A-version on another side—through their common borrowings from *Jerome ageyns Jovynyan* and from *Valerie*. See esp. Koeppl, *Anglia*, N. F., I, 174 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Miss Petersen's *The Sources of the Parson's Tale* (Boston, 1901).

it penance enough to warrant his having "now . . . the lesse peyne," any one who has read but the opening pages of its fierce misanthropy can readily believe.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps even possible to go one step farther and venture, though with the utmost diffidence, a conjecture regarding the particular member of the company for whom the translation may have been intended. Consider for a moment the Man of Law's head-link. The Man of Law is certain that he "can right now no thrifty tale seyn." Chaucer, in fact, has said them all—the stories of "thise noble wyves and thise loveres eke," examples of wifhood like Penelope and Alcestis (though no such cursed stories, to be sure, as those of Canace and Apollonius of Tyre). For to the Man of Law "the knotte why that every tale is told" seems to be mainly its bent to edification. Moreover, he is puzzled about the form his tale shall take, and extremely averse to being by any chance mistaken for a Muse:

But of my tale how shal I doon this day?  
 Me were looth he lykned, doutelesse,  
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides—  
*Metamorphoseos* wot what I mene.

And so, he declares,

*I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.*

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<sup>1</sup> Even Deschamps, whom one can easily imagine revelling in its gloomy pages, seems to have been unable to finish it. For it is worth noting that on April 18, 1383, Deschamps presented to Charles VI a translation (more accurately, a paraphrase) of parts of the *De Contemptu* under the title of *Livre de la Fragilité d'umaine Nature* (*Oeuvres*, II, 237-305). His selections are made from the following chapters (Bonn edition): I, 1-10, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 22-24, 29; II, 1, 6, 29; III, 1, 11, 15-17. Chaucer's fragments are from I, 1 (?), 16, 18, 22, 23; II, 17, 18, 19, 21 (see Koeppel, *loc. cit.*). It is of course a bare possibility that Deschamps's *Double Lay de la Fragilité humaine* was included among the poems he sent to Chaucer, in which case it may have given to Chaucer the suggestion for his own translation of the work. For other translations of the treatise, see the bibliographical notes to *Le Passe Temps de tout Homme et de toute Femme*, in *Oeuvres poétiques de Guillaume Alexis* (*Soc. de Anc. Textes fr.*), II, 71 ff.

That Chaucer actually intended, when the head-link was written, to put a prose preachment of some sort into the Man of Law's mouth admits little doubt. That it was not originally the story of Constance which he was to tell, follows, it seems clear, from the fact that her history is one of those very stories of "noble wyves" regarding which the Man of Law asks :

What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde ?

Just at this time, however, as appears from the Prologue to the *Seintes Legende of Cupyde* itself, Chaucer seems to have been working over a prose translation of a tract quite sombre enough to satisfy even the Man of Law. And what the Man of Law actually begins with is a prologue taken bodily from this very work, while fragments of it appear here and there in the tale he does really tell. If Chaucer began, then, his prose translation with the Man of Law in mind ; if he soon found it too much for even his own robust taste ; if he substituted as the next best thing the story of Constance, in all likelihood composed before ; if, however, a bit of the original material, offering a rather apt introduction to the account of the merchants with which the tale begins, occurred to him as a fitting prologue, while other bits were called to mind as, pen in hand, he went once more over the poem—if one make these assumptions, one seems at least with some plausibility to account for several rather puzzling features of the situation as it stands. Be that, however, as it may, the distribution of the material of the *De Contemptu* elsewhere seems with some clearness to indicate that the translation, or at least its working over, falls in the time of the *Canterbury Tales* instead of in the earlier period, and this in turn carries with it as an inference the late date of that version of the Prologue which refers to it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The introduction of the lark passage in A. (ll. 139-143 ; cf. *Pubs. Mod.*

That the revision was a late piece of work seems to be indicated, again, by an extremely interesting and suggestive trait that characterizes it—a trait which in any case throws no little light upon the way in which Chaucer went about his task. For one of the most striking things connected with the revision is the scrupulous care which Chaucer takes to save himself the trouble of altering rhymes, and this invincible disinclination to touch his rhyme-words is of the utmost interest, independently of its present bearing. What has happened is briefly this: In only eleven instances in the entire Prologue has Chaucer changed the rhyme of a couplet, and then, it would seem, usually under stress of stern necessity.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in twenty-one instances he has

*Lang. Assoc.*, xix, 682) may possibly also point to the period of the *Canterbury Tales*. It has already been noted (p. 754, n. 2) that the couplet A. 139-140, which closely parallels F. 399-400, is too nearly a commonplace to give such a verbal detail evidential value. But that Chaucer's interest in the various strands which had entered or were to enter the tangled web of the *Squire's Tale*—particularly his treatment of the virtue of the magic ring—may have suggested not so much the phrasing as the finely imagined device itself of the herald lark whose words were understood, is not impossible. Moreover, that the *Squire's Tale* and the A-version were in mind not far from the same time seems probable from another interesting parallel—A. 113-18 with F. 52-57—which includes the reference to the sword of winter. The passage in A. differs from B., except in tenses, in one detail, the substitution in A. 112 of "And clothed him in grene al" for "That naked was and clad hit" of B. 130. F. 54 reads: "What for the seson and the yonge grene." That is, at the one point where A. varies from B., it agrees with the parallel passage in the *Squire's Tale*. (One should further compare with the three passages referred to *The Book of the Duchesse*, 410 ff., and *R. R.*, 56 ff.) It may be noted, also, that F. 481-82 recalls A. 83-84. The evidence is in itself altogether too slight to be convincing. Taken in connection with other considerations, however, which point the same way, it gains at least corroborative value.

<sup>1</sup> (1) A. 13-14 = B. 13-14; (2) A. 49-50 = B. 49-50; (3) A. 53-54 = B. 63-64; (4) A. 91-92 = B. 181-82; (5) A. 224-25 = B. 270-71; (6) A. 264-65 = B. 332-33; (7) A. 266-67 = B. 334-35; (8) A. 312-13 = B. 338-39; (9) A. 330-31 = B. 354-55; (10) A. 332-33 = B. 356-57; (11) A. 526-27 = B. 538-39. Of these, it will be noted that (2) and (3) belong

changed an entire line *except the last word*.<sup>1</sup> One is inclined to fancy that quite as much ingenuity must have been exercised in keeping the final word intact as in throwing it overboard and modelling the couplet *de novo*, but seemingly Chaucer did not think so. Moreover, in nine lines the last *two* words alone remain unchanged;<sup>2</sup> while in two lines only the last *three*,<sup>3</sup> and in three lines only the last *four*<sup>4</sup> are left untouched. That is to say, in thirty-five instances has more than half of the line been modified, and the rhyme-word carefully preserved. To these thirty-five cases, furthermore, there should be added the nine lines<sup>5</sup> in which a single new rhyme-word is substituted for an old without, however, changing the rhyme itself. It is clear, then, that the *vis inertiae* to be overcome before Chaucer could bring himself to modify a rhyme was by no means inconsiderable.

At least two inferences may perhaps be drawn from these very suggestive facts. In the first place, they seem to offer

to the recasting of the *cento* from the *Marguerite* poems; that (4) is among the introductory lines of the passage that has been carried back over one hundred lines in order to fuse the two parts of the poem into one; that (5) has lost from between its two lines twenty-nine lines of B., through the omission and transposition involved in the modification of the *balade* setting; that (6), (7) and (8) form the setting of the long book-paragraph inserted in A.; and that (11) forms part of the notable change in the god of Love's final reference to the *balade*. That is to say, all but three—(1), (9), (10)—of the changes in the rhyme of couplets belong to the more thoroughgoing portions of the revision, where rather heroic measures were rendered necessary. (Couplets added or omitted *in toto* are of course not included.)

<sup>1</sup> A. 28 = B. 28; 51 = 61; 58 = 56; 59 = 67; 60 = 68; 69 = 81; 70 = 82; 72 = 188; 78 = 194; 83 = 99; 84 = 100; 107 = 120; 127 = 139; 146 = 214; 160 = 228; 165 = 233; 179 = 276; 227 = 300; 348 = 368; 402 = 414; 532 = 543. Cf. 106 = 202; 108 = 119.

<sup>2</sup> A. 33 = B. 33; 36 = 36; 52 = 62; 68 = 80; 89 = 108; 117 = 129; 136 = 150; 144 = 212; 242 = 316; 341 = 363.

<sup>3</sup> A. 73 = B. 189; 98 = 204.

<sup>4</sup> A. 94 = B. 198; 166 = 234; 533 = 542.

<sup>5</sup> A. 39 = B. 39; 138 = 152; 143 = 211; 164 = 231; 234 = 308; 247 = 321; 317 = 341; 364 = 380; 544 = 578.



an additional criterion of no small value for determining which is, of the two versions, the revision and which the original. For nothing could better illustrate the essential difference between the spontaneity of first-hand composition and the restraint exercised in revision by what stands already written than just the phenomena in question. So long as thought and feeling are fluid, words come half unconsciously, and rhyme answers naturally to rhyme; the thought is first, the words second. In revision, on the other hand, precisely the reverse is the case. The word is *there*; the mould is already cast; the very lines are largely predetermined.<sup>1</sup> It is not so much his present thought as it is his previous expression which constitutes now for the poet the dominant factor, and from this very element of calculation involved, which Chaucer's treatment of the rhyme-words so strikingly illustrates, it follows that a revision will be apt to possess, other things being equal, more intellectual, fewer sensuous or emotional qualities than its original.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chaucer's problem, as he set it, was very like that which confronts the modern writer who wishes to revise his work after page-proof has been reached. The flexibility even of galley-proof is no longer there; one is forced to cut one's phrase—still more one's thought—to the measure of the space already occupied.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, for an excellent illustration, the elimination from the *Palace of Art*, on revision, of the stanzas dealing with the sensuous delights of the soul. And, indeed, the relation of Tennyson's revised *Palace of Art* in the volume of 1842 to the original of 1833 has some rather illuminating points of contact with the relation of A. to B. Tennyson's growing sense of artistic unity found expression in the transposition of large groups of stanzas in order to make the ground-plan of his palace more consistent, just as Chaucer transposed large groups of couplets seemingly for greater temporal unity. The same sterner sense of the subordination of beauty of detail to the demands of the artistic whole that seems to have underlain the excision from A. of the lovely *Filostrato* lines and the condensation of the panegyric on the daisy, one finds in the omission from the *Palace of Art* of the beautiful stanza (among many others) on the "deep unsounded skies Shuddering with silent stars." And curiously enough, while in its first three-fourths the *Palace of Art* has undergone perhaps more extensive

And that precisely this element of calculation rather than *abandon* does characterize A. as contrasted with B., has been already sufficiently emphasized. But, in the second place and more particularly, this almost excessively scrupulous guarding of the rhymes as they stand seems to be peculiarly consistent with what we should expect of the older rather than the younger artist—with such a mood, for instance, as gained expression when Chaucer, in another poem, found it

. . . . a greet penaunce,  
*Sith rym in English hath swich scarsitee,*  
 To folowe word by word the curiositee  
 Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in France.<sup>1</sup>

That is precisely the attitude which finds concrete illustration in the handling of the rhyme-words in the Prologue, and so far forth the facts here noted corroborate the other evidence for the later date of the revision.

Finally, there remains the fact of the single manuscript of A. as contrasted with the dozen or more manuscripts of B.—a consideration which has been urged as a convincing argument for the priority of A. But to say the very least, the bearing of the existence of but the single manuscript is exceedingly ambiguous. Unquestionably one explanation might be that the supposed second version almost immediately superseded the first, of which no more copies, accordingly, were made. One has to be on one's guard, however, even here, against a particularly insidious form of the ambiguous

revision than any other poem of its length in the language, its last twenty stanzas—save for the omission of one, and four slight verbal changes in three others—remain untouched. Perhaps on the whole no more convincing evidence of any sort could be offered that the qualities of revised work, particularly after the lapse of a few years, are not those of spontaneity but of restraint, not those of lavishness but of economy, not those of "sweet disorder" but of conscious plan, than a detailed comparison of Tennyson's volume of 1842 with that of 1833, for the poems common to both.

<sup>1</sup> *Complaynt of Venus*, ll. 79-82.

middle. For "author's revision" carries with it in these latter days implications unheard of in the fourteenth century—implications which none the less slip, to the darkening of counsel, into one's reasoning in the premises. "Author's revision" now implies the relegation of earlier editions to the shelves of the second-hand book-shops, either finally or until the times of their restitution as rarities. But a fourteenth century MS., once launched on its career, had no such fate to apprehend. Such a supplanting of a first edition by a revision as modern conditions of printing and publication render inevitable, was in the nature of the case precluded where the "first edition" was a manuscript, which might proceed to multiply itself, without let or hindrance from other manuscripts, to the end of the chapter. But even granting the contention, it remains by no means the only possible explanation of the one MS. of A. On the other hand, the facts are quite as adequately accounted for if one suppose that the first version had the start of the revision by seven or eight years, and won, as it readily might, so firm a hold on the popular affection that the revision (particularly if undertaken for some such special reason as has been suggested)<sup>1</sup> failed, naturally enough, to displace the more familiar form. The cases are of course only partly parallel, but in the well-known popular attitude towards the Revised Version of the English Bible one may see an illustration of the more or less unreasoning tendency to hold by an old and well-loved literary form against a new, charm it never so wisely. The very fact that the MS. of A. is unique, accordingly, is certainly susceptible of interpretation as an argument for the lapse of several years between its composition and that of the earlier form.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 781.

<sup>2</sup> Bilderbeck assigns B., which he of course regards as the revised version, to the year 1390. Chaucer's gratitude to the Queen, as expressed in the

## III.

It seems possible to carry the investigation a step farther. Regarding the chronology of certain of the works mentioned in the Prologue the suggestions to follow—which, far from being the result of any preconceived theory, are on the other hand the outgrowth of successive inferences from observations whose significance was not at first perceived—are

Prologue, is for his appointment, July 12, 1389, as Clerk of the King's Works (p. 101); the love-making of the birds (which Bilderbeck connects with his elaborate interpretation of the details of the allegory in the *Parlement of Foules*: see his edition of *Chaucer's Minor Poems*, London, 1895, pp. 77-78) symbolizes "the healing of differences among the political parties of the period under reference" (p. 102); the lines on pity's "stronge gentil myght" laud "the moderation and forgiving spirit which characterized the new policy of the King (*ib.*); the "note of admonition" in the lecture on the duties of a king "gives place to a note of admiration in the [revised Prologue], which reads like a compliment to a king whose acts and policy are in strict accordance with the ideal of kingship presented by the poet" (p. 103); the lilies are removed from the god of Love's garland on account of the three years' truce with France (*ib.*); the references to Chaucer's own age go out on a gentle hint from Gower (pp. 105-6)—and the poem becomes a veritable cryptogram. Moreover, Bilderbeck's selection of 1390 is manifestly influenced in another respect by his strong *penchant* for allegorizing, which extends even to numbers. There are nineteen ladies, for instance, following the god of Love and Alcestis, because in 1385 Queen Anne was nineteen years old (p. 90, 99); and Chaucer's "statement that the month of May always draws him . . . to observe the *resurrection* of the daisy . . . may be a symbolical way of describing something of the nature of an annual birthday tribute to the queen" (p. 90). As for this tribute we must note that "from 1385 to 1394 we have a period of *ten* years. There are *ten* good women whose stories are given in *nine* legends" (p. 89). Ergo, while "the coincidence in number may be accidental, it is at least consistent with the hypothesis" that the annual tribute of a legend continued up to the Queen's death! (It may be remarked in passing that as "Chaucer's plan or commission contemplated the incorporation of only *nineteen* legends" (p. 92), one each year, and as the Queen was nineteen years old when the series began, each annual tribute would constitute a graceful reminder of the approach of her fortieth year). Moreover, Bilderbeck finds "evidence of a revision of the Legends up to and including the *Legend of Ariadne*, which is the *sixth*

offered with the utmost caution. At the same time they seem to afford on the whole a distinctly more reasonable working-hypothesis for the chronology of the so-called Middle Period than some of the more purely *a priori* theories that hold the field, and if they should by any chance lead to a really fruitful reconsideration of the subject, their individual fate will be a matter of small moment.

In Chaucer's *Legend of Ariadne* are certain curious details for which, so far as I know, no explanation has ever been offered. They are not found in any of the other known versions of the story.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the agreement between Chaucer's and Gower's accounts in two otherwise peculiar features,<sup>2</sup> Professor Macaulay has suggested that

in order" (p. 89). "Now, the period from May, 1385, to May, 1390, includes six months of May" (p. 108). Therefore, if one legend were written each year and six are found to be revised, the revision of the Legends, and presumably of the Prologue, must have taken place in the sixth year, namely, 1390. But unfortunately Bilderbeck forgets entirely what he had previously pointed out—the fact that *ten* good women have between them only *nine* legends! The *Legend of Hypsipyle and Medea* (No. IV), accordingly, must do duty for both 1388 and 1389 (Bilderbeck actually assigns the *Legend of Dido*, as the third in order, to 1387; see p. 90), the *Legend of Lucretia* (No. V) would fall in 1390, and the *Legend of Ariadne* (No. VI), and the revision, in 1391! The theory thus furnishes its own *reductio ad absurdum*. "La préoccupation chronologique," says Legouis with justice, though in another connection, "devient peu à peu idée fixe. Elle se fait tyrannique et arrive à gauchir le sentiment esthétique en le sollicitant vers ses fins propres. L'appréciation de l'œuvre n'y est jamais tout à fait pure et désintéressée. . . . Il n'est peut-être pas nécessaire que la vie de Chaucer soit conjecturée, il est essentiel que son œuvre soit lue avec justesse et avec goût" (*op. cit.*, pp. 19–20).

<sup>1</sup> See Skeat, *Oxford Chaucer*, III, xxxix, 333, for references to the sources of the story in Ovid, Plutarch, Boccaccio, Hyginus, and Virgil. Cf. Bech, *Anglia*, v, 337–42.

<sup>2</sup> "The idea that the son of Minos went to Athens to study philosophy, [and] the incident of the ball of pitch given by Ariadne to Theseus to be used against the Minotaur" (*Works of John Gower*, ed. Macaulay, III, 503); cf. also Bech, *Anglia*, v, 339–41. For Gower's version of the story see *Confessio Amantis*, v, ll. 5231 ff. (ed. Macaulay, III, 89 ff.)

while for the rest the stories of Chaucer and Gower are quite independent, "in regard to these matters we must assume a common source;" but of the details now to be mentioned there is no trace whatever in Gower. They involve, in a word, the way in which Chaucer has conceived the imprisonment of Theseus and the entrance of Ariadne into the plot, and particularly the proposition of Theseus to become after his release Ariadne's page. More specifically, the points in question are as follows. The prison of Theseus is a tower, which is "joyning in the walle to a foreyne" belonging to the two daughters of King Minos, who dwell in their chambers above. The two young women hear Theseus complaining as they stand on the wall in the moonlight, and have compassion on the prisoner.<sup>1</sup> When, their plan for his escape having been formulated, they disclose it to Theseus and the jailor, Theseus proposes to forsake his heritage at home and to become Ariadne's page, working for his sustenance.<sup>2</sup> In order that neither Minos nor any one else "shal

<sup>1</sup> The tour, ther as this Theseus is throwe  
 Doun in the botom derke and wonder lowe,  
 Was joyning in the walle to a foreyne ;  
 And hit was longing to the doghtren tweyne  
 Of King Minos, that in hir chambres grete  
 Dwelten above, toward the maister-strete,  
 In mochel mirthe, in joye and in solas.  
 Not I nat how, hit happed ther, per cas,  
 As Theseus compleyned him by nighte,  
 The kinges doghter, Adrian that highte,  
 And eek her suster Phedra, herden al  
 His compleyning, as they stode on the wal  
 And lokeden upon the brighte mone ;  
 Hem leste nat to go to bedde sone.  
 And of his wo they had compassioun ;  
 A kinges sone to ben in swich prisoun  
 And be devoured, thoughte hem gret pitee.

(*Leg.* 1960-1976.)

<sup>2</sup> Fro yow, whyl that me lasteth lyf or breeth,  
 I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,  
 But in your servise thus I wol endure,

[him] conne espye," he declares he will disguise himself in lowly wise :

So slyly and so wel I shal me gye,  
And me so wel disfigure and so lowe,  
That in this world ther shal no man me knowe.<sup>1</sup>

The proposition is of course not carried out, and the remainder of the story follows more closely the classical sources.

So soon, now, as one isolates these details which Chaucer, and apparently Chaucer alone, has added to give more body to the somewhat meagre outlines of the classical story, one sees that they very strikingly recall certain features of the *Teseide* and the *Knight's Tale*. The prison in the *Legend* is "joyning in the walle to a foreyne" (1962); in the *Teseide*, Palamon and Arcite are "in prigionie Allato allato al giardino amoroso;"<sup>2</sup> in the *Knight's Tale* the dungeon "was evene

That, as a wrecche unknowe, I wol yow serve  
For ever-mo, til that myn herte sterve.  
Forsake I wol at hoom myn heritage,  
And, as I seide, ben of your court a page,  
If that ye vouche-sauf that, in this place,  
Ye graunte me to han so gret a grace  
That I may han nat but my mete and drinke;  
And for my sustenance yit wol I swinke.

(*Leg.* 2031-2041.)

<sup>1</sup> *Leg.* 2045 ff. : cf. 2060-65 :

And, if I profre yow in low manere  
To ben your page and serven yow right here,  
But I yow serve as lowly in that place,  
I prey to Mars to yive me swiche a grace  
That shames deeth on me ther mote falle,  
And deeth and povert to my frendes alle.

Cf. also ll. 2080-2082.

<sup>2</sup> *Teseide*, III, 11. For the relation of the garden, and so of the dungeon, to Emily's room, see III, 8 :

Ogni mattina venuta ad un'ora  
In un giardin se n'entrava soletta,  
Ch' allato alla sua camera dimora  
Faceva, etc.

joynant to the gardin-wal" (A. 1060). In both the *Legend* and the *Knight's Tale* the prison is in a tower;<sup>1</sup> in the *Teseide*, however, it is a room in the palace.<sup>2</sup> In the *Legend*, "as Theseus compleyned him," Ariadne and Phaedra "herden al His compleyning, as they stode on the wal" (1968 ff.); in the *Teseide* "Palamon tutto stordito Gridò: omè! . . . A quell' omè la giovenetta bella Si volse;"<sup>3</sup> the detail is entirely changed in the *Knight's Tale*. In the *Legend*, "of his wo they had compassioun" (1974); in the *Teseide*, "nè fu nel girsen via senza pensiero Di quell' omè."<sup>4</sup> In the *Legend* Theseus proposes to be Ariadne's page; in the *Teseide* Arcite is disguised "in maniera di pover valletto . . . a mode che un vil garzone,"<sup>5</sup> and becomes the servant of Theseus, unrecognized by him but known to Emily;<sup>6</sup> in the *Knight's Tale*, "A yeer or two he was in this servyse, Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte" (1426-27). In the *Legend* Theseus declares:

And for my sustenance yit wol I swinke;

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<sup>1</sup> "The tour, ther as this Theseus is throwe" (*Leg.* 1960); "The grete tour. . . . (Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun)," A. 1056-58.

<sup>2</sup> Perchè di sangue reale eran nati,  
E felli dentro al palagio abitare,  
E così in una camera tenere (II, 99).

The three accounts differ entirely in the elevation of the prison. In the *Legend* Theseus is thrown "Down in the botom derke and wonder lowe" (1961); in the *Teseide* the prisoners' room seems to be on the garden level, for when Emily hears Palamon's cry, "Si volse destra in su la poppa manca;" in the *Knight's Tale* Palamon "romed in a chambre on heigh, in which he al the noble citee seigh" (A. 1065-66).

<sup>3</sup> *Tes.*, III, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Tes.*, III, 19. In all three accounts the jailor appears, but in the *Legend* it is by his aid that Theseus escapes (1987-90, 2021, 2026, 2051-53, 2141, 2150, 2153); while in both the *Teseide* and the *Knight's Tale* he is drugged, and the escape is made by the aid of a friend (*Tes.*, V, 24-25; A. 1468-74).

<sup>5</sup> *Tes.*, IV, 22.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*, IV, 40 ff.



in the *Teseide* Arcite is spoken of as

Diversamente l'opere menando  
Quando per esso e quando per altrui ;<sup>1</sup>

in the *Knight's Tale*,

Wel coude he hewen wode and water bere . . . .  
And therto was he strong and big of bones  
To doon that any wight can him devise.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Legend* Theseus says :

so slyly and so wel I shall me gye  
And me so wel *disfigure* and so *lowe*,  
That in this world ther shal no man me knowe ;

in the *Teseide* Arcite through his grief

. . . . sì era del tutto *trasmutato*  
*Che nullo non l'avia raffigurato* :<sup>3</sup>

in the *Knight's Tale* it is the fact that "his face was so *disfigured* of maladye" (A. 1403-04) which suggested to Arcite that "if that he bar him *lowe*" (1405) he might live in Athens unknown. Finally, it may be noted that Theseus in the *Legend* declares that he has been Ariadne's servant seven years "thogh ye wiste hit nat" (2116); while in the *Knight's Tale* the imprisonment of Palamon lasts seven years (A. 1452, cf. 1462). The time of Arcite's service in the *Teseide* is not stated.<sup>4</sup>

What, now, is the significance of these facts? In the first place, it seems clear that in his elaboration of the story of Ariadne Chaucer took certain of his suggestions from the *Teseide*. The parallels would be striking enough even if one did not know that Chaucer was acquainted with Boccaccio's poem; with that knowledge the evidence seems conclusive. In the

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.*, iv, 31.

<sup>2</sup> A. 1422-25; cf. 1415 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Tes.*, iv, 28.

<sup>4</sup> He is with Menelao "vicin d'un anno" (iv, 20), but for his service at Egina (iv, 21-39) and with Theseus (iv, 40 ff.) no definite notes of time seem to be given.

story of Ariadne as he had it no hint was given of the way in which Ariadne and Theseus were brought into communication with each other; the situation in the *Teseide*, including the nearness of the prison to Emily's garden and chamber and Emily's overhearing of the prisoner's lament, provided an adequate device for filling this very serious gap in the action. In like manner, Arcite's service in the house with Emily offered a suggestion of no less value towards giving much needed body to the characterization of Theseus, while at the same time materially heightening the effect of his perfidy. That one may recognize, then, the influence of the *Teseide* in the *Legend of Ariadne* there seems to be little room for doubt.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>There is a very curious blunder in the poem which seems to corroborate the view of the influence of the *Teseide*. All the MSS. except two—Addit. 9832, Brit. Mus., and R. 3. 19, Trin., Camb.—read at the beginning of l. 1966 "Of Athenes"—i. e. :

Dwelten above, toward the maister-strete  
Of Athenes—

and the text in the *Globe Chaucer* so stands, with the note: "probably Chaucer's own slip." The reading of the *Oxford Chaucer*—"In mochel mirth"—is Professor Skeat's "bold alteration," as he himself calls it (III, 335), "suggested by MS. T., and supported by MS. Addit. 9832, which has 'in moche myrth.'" But it is interesting to note that the prison in the *Teseide* which Chaucer seems to have had in mind in his description was in Athens, so that the reason of the slip may have been his overlooking, for the moment, the fact that in the story he was really telling the scene had been transferred to Crete.

It is perhaps worth while to note, too, the connection, in the *Legend*, of Mars with a vow conditioned on victory :

By Mars, that is the cheef of my hileve,  
So that I mighte liven and nat faile  
To-morwe for t'acheve my bataile,  
I nolde never fro this place flee, etc.

(*Leg.* 2109-12 : cf. 2063.)

Compare Arcite's prayer to Mars (A. 2373 ff.), esp. 2402, 2405, 2407 :

Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille . . . .  
And do that I to-morwe have victorie . . . .  
Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren, etc.

But where in the complicated history of the influence of the *Teseide* on Chaucer's work is just this instance to be placed? In particular, may we determine whether it preceded or followed the first telling of the *Knight's Tale*?<sup>1</sup> There seems to be a pretty definite answer possible. If the *Ariadne* followed the *Knight's Tale*, what we have is a decidedly inferior and rather sketchy replica of two motives already fully and artistically worked out.<sup>2</sup> That is, to say the least, inherently improbable. More specifically, while the substitution of the "foreyne" of the *Legend*<sup>3</sup> for the lovely picture of the garden in Boccaccio is on any theory puzzling enough (though as the crude working out of a suggestion from a story not yet made the poet's own, it is at least intelligible), the view that just that substitution of all others should be deliberately made for Chaucer's own exqui-

Note also *Leg.* 2100 :

Doon her he *wedded* at your *hoom-coming* ;

and cf. A. 883-84 :

And of the feste that was at hir *weddinge*,  
And of the tempest at hir *hoom-cominge*.

Compare also *Leg.* 1912 ; A. 865.

<sup>1</sup>Ten Brink's theory of an original *Palamon and Arcite* in seven-line stanzas has been, I think, entirely refuted by Dr. F. J. Mather, Jr. (*An English Miscellany*, presented to Dr. Furnivall (1901), pp. 301-13 ; cf. Dr. Mather's edition of *The Prologue and the Knight's Tale*, xvii), and by Dr. J. S. P. Tatlock (in a discussion soon to be published). Cf. also the present paper, p. 793, n. 5. That the *Knight's Tale* as it stands represents substantially the original "love of Palamon and Arcyte" (slightly modified here and there, it may be, to adapt it to the character of the Knight) seems by far the most probable hypothesis.

<sup>2</sup>Ten Brink assures us (*Studien*, p. 63) that the *Palamon* in stanzas was closer to the original and fuller than the present *Knight's Tale*, so that even on his hypothesis the inference of the text holds.

<sup>3</sup>The N. E. D. is probably correct in accepting here the usual sense of *chambre foreine* (s. v. *foreign*, B., 2). Much as one wishes to agree with Professor Skeat (III, 335) and Mätzner against the meaning 'privy,' the usage seems all to point the other way. Cf. also Bech, *Anglia*, v, 342.

site rendering of the picture in the *Knight's Tale* is almost inconceivable. And finally, that after he had created the very noble and stately figure of Theseus in the *Knight's Tale* Chaucer should, once more deliberately, superimpose upon it in his reader's minds the despicable traitor of the *Legend of Ariadne*,<sup>1</sup> only the most convincing external evidence could lead one to believe. On the other hand, that the crude and not particularly meritorious sketch should precede the more finished and elaborate development is merely in the natural order of things.<sup>2</sup>

If this inference of the priority of the *Ariadne* to the first telling of the *Knight's Tale* be valid, it carries with it several interesting and somewhat important conclusions. For one thing, it follows that at least one of the individual *Legends* was composed before the Prologue. For the *Palamon and Arceite* is distinctly stated to have preceded the Prologue (ll. 420-21), and we have just seen that the *Ariadne* gives evi-

<sup>1</sup>Part (indeed the main part, it would seem) of Chaucer's purpose in writing the *Legend of Ariadne* he declares to be

. . . to clepe agein unto memorie  
Of Theseus the grete untrouthe of love . . .  
Be reed for shame ! now I thy lyf beginne

(1889-90, 1893).

<sup>2</sup>It is noteworthy that Boccaccio's device of making Emily overhear Palamon's groans, and so become aware of the prisoner's presence—the device so essential to Chaucer's treatment of the situation in the *Ariadne*—is altogether omitted from the *Knight's Tale*. For the change Tyrwhitt's reason still seems to be sufficient: "As no consequence is to follow from their being seen by Emilia at this time, it is better, I think, to suppose, as Chaucer has done, that they are not seen by her" (*The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, 1775, IV, 136 n.). The omission, accordingly, is perhaps independent of the fact that the device seems to have been already used, although the agreement of the *Ariadne* and the *Knight's Tale* as against the *Teseide* in the explicit mention of the *tower* and in the reference to the *seven years* seems to indicate that (as indeed with Chaucer would be almost inevitable) the earlier handling of the material was not absent from his mind when the *Knight's Tale* was written.

dence of having preceded the *Palamon*.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it also follows at once that the Prologue was not Chaucer's first essay in the use of the decasyllabic couplet.<sup>2</sup> And indeed, so soon as one entertains these two conclusions, they seem strongly to justify themselves on other grounds. Considering the second point first, it is certainly rather surprising that the initial experiment in the use of a new metre should be so astonishingly successful as the Prologue—particularly when in several, at least, of the *Legends* supposed to follow it the metre is handled with no such mastery. It is perhaps impossible, at least until still more shall have been done towards the establishment of Chaucer's text, to apply to his poems rigidly formal metrical tests from which the personal equation may be sufficiently eliminated to render the results at all trustworthy,<sup>3</sup> so that the ear must probably for some

<sup>1</sup>To the evidence already adduced for the early date of the *Ariadne* should be added its curious inconsistencies. The tribute to Minos is twice said to be an *annual* one (ll. 1926, 1941), while between the two statements occurs another (l. 1932) to the effect that it is every *third* year. Theseus in l. 2075 is said to be "but of a twenty yeer and three;" in ll. 2099-2100 Ariadne requests that he have Phaedra married to *his son* on their arrival! Theseus declares (though how he could have previously known her is not told) that he has been Ariadne's servant seven years in his own country—to which, however, it may of course be replied that a lover is not to be held rigidly to the truth in such a pass. Ariadne is greatly delighted for her sister and herself that "Now be we duchesses, bothe I and ye" (l. 2127), as if they were not princesses already. And it may be added that it is really Phaedra and not the heroine who does all the planning for Theseus's escape, Ariadne simply asserting, in seven lines, that he is to be helped, while Phaedra, in forty lines, furnishes the details. The discrepancy involved in l. 1966 has been already referred to (p. 808, n. 1).

<sup>2</sup>That would also follow upon the rejection of the theory that the original *Palamon* was in seven-line stanzas.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Mather's belief (*An English Miscellany*, p. 312, n. 1) that, should metrical statistics be collected for all of Chaucer's poems in the heroic couplet, "it is possible that results as valuable as those obtained from the analytical study of Shakespeare's blank verse might be reached," one hopes may be prophetic. And within certain limits results are perhaps even now

time be, as indeed in any case it ought to be, the court of last resort. And if one read aloud from the Prologue Chaucer's account, for example, of his preparations for the night in the arbor<sup>1</sup> (eliminating from one's estimate so far as may be the charm of the diction considered by itself) and then at once read from the *Ariadne* the account of Theseus's voyage to the island,<sup>2</sup> one feels, I think, independently of the subject matter, all the difference between the flexibility and inevitableness of a medium of expression perfectly mastered, and the stiffness and intrusiveness of a measure of which the user is still distinctly conscious. The flow, the movement, of the thought in the passage from the Prologue is as absolutely untrammelled, as liquid (if one may phrase it so) as if the decasyllabic couplet had been from the beginning of time the predestined rhythm of just that thought. The poet is *thinking in his metre*, as one thinks in a language one has at last really learned. The passage in the *Ariadne*, on the other hand, has nothing inevitable about it; the thought is cut according to the metre; it does not flow, it jerks.<sup>3</sup> The thought and the metre, in other words, are still two things; the one is undergoing adjustment to the other, as one's expression is adapted to the exigencies of one's vocabulary in a partially mastered foreign tongue. Independently of all other con-

attainable. Such attempts, however, as I have myself made in this direction in the study of the *Legend* have gone far to convince me, on comparing their conclusions with the results of similar attempts by one or two others, that a more definite working basis than any that at present exists is necessary before the data themselves can be relied on.

<sup>1</sup> B. 197 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Leg.* 2144 ff. The two passages were chosen at random—except that both were to be narrative.

<sup>3</sup> One is often painfully conscious of the line-lengths as one reads, as one is conscious of the bumping of the ties when one's train is off the track. In the passage from the Prologue one keeps serenely on the rails.

siderations contingent upon subject matter and the like, it is little short of incredible that Chaucer should have handled his instrument as he does in the *Ariadne* after he had acquired the mastery of it which the Prologue shows. Technique of that sort is scarcely a thing that can be put on and off at will. Moreover, the passage in the Prologue has Chaucer's unapproachable and (happily) unanalyzable *melody* to a supreme degree; the oftener one reads it the more magical it seems. In the *Ariadne*, however correctly the metres may scan, they never *sing*—at least for more than a line or two at a time. But melody, even Chaucer's, is not altogether independent of technique, and it is a fair presumption that the *Ariadne* is unmelodious because the technical difficulties of a somewhat unfamiliar metre had not yet been surmounted, and that the Prologue has Chaucer's "divine fluidity of movement" because meantime in that very metre practice of his art had shared with great creating nature. On the side of freedom and of melody, then, one finds distinct corroboration of the conclusion drawn from a consideration of the sources.

In still another respect the difference between the *Ariadne* and the Prologue is hardly less marked. In the *Ariadne* Chaucer has not yet learned to give *variety* to his line. In the paragraph (ll. 2136–2178) which has been referred to already occur, within forty-two lines, the following :

And took his wyf, and eek her suster free (2152)  
 And gat him ther a newe barge anon (2160)  
 And taketh his leve, and hoomward saileth he (2162)  
 And fond his fader drenched in the see (2178)  
 And forth un-to this Minotaur he geeth (2145)  
 And out he cometh by the clewe again (2148)  
 And by the teching of this Adriane (2146)  
 And by the gayler geten hath a barge (2150)  
 And of his wyves tresor gan hit charge (2151)  
 And of his contree-folk a ful greet woon (2161)  
 And in his armes hath this Adriane (2158)

And in an yle, amid the wilde see (2163)  
 And in that yle half a day he lette (2167)  
 And to the contre of Ennopye him dighte (2155)  
 And to his contree-ward he saileth blyve (2176)  
 And every point performed was in dede (2138)  
 And Theseus is lad unto his deeth (2144)  
 And eek the gayler, and with hem alle three (2153)  
 And seide, that on the lond he moste him resté (2168)  
 And, for to tellen shortly in this cas (2170)  
 And shortly of this matere for to make (2136).

Not only do exactly half of the lines in the paragraph begin with *and*,<sup>1</sup> but the same fall of the pause recurs incessantly. There is almost nothing of the wonderful skill in the placing of the caesura, so manifest in the verse of the Prologue and the *Knight's Tale*, which weaves upon the uniform background of the recurrent line-lengths the endlessly shifting pattern of the sentence-cadences. In another sense from that presumably intended, in the *Ariadne* Chaucer is certainly not yet able to "make the metres . . . as [him] leste,"<sup>2</sup> and one's sense of the presence of the apprentice hand is once more heightened.

It seems to be clear, then, that at least one of the *Legends* preceded the first version of the Prologue. Is there any evidence that this applies to others than the *Ariadne*? It is to be noted that the *Phyllis* seems to stand in particularly close

<sup>1</sup>The number of lines so beginning in the entire *Legend of Ariadne* is 91—i. e., 1 in every 3.7.

<sup>2</sup>The line as it actually stands at the close of the Prologue—"Make the metres of hem as the leste" (B. 562)—has usually been taken as a reference of Chaucer's to the new metre of the *Legend*. If so, the present view leaves the allusion untouched, for even though some or all of the *Legends* in fact antedated the Prologue, the latter by a conventional fiction would of course refer to them as still to come. At the same time it seems very doubtful whether "make the metres" really means any more than "ryme" of l. 570, so that the real emphasis falls on "as the leste," and the sense of the passage is merely: Tell their stories in metre, but otherwise as you like—save they must not be too long drawn out.



relation to the *Ariadne*. As a matter of fact, the former is little else than a sequel to the latter, and refers back to it constantly<sup>1</sup> in such a way as seems to show that the *Ariadne* was at the time fresh in mind. Moreover, the conception of Theseus in the *Phyllis* is no more likely than that of the *Ariadne* itself to have followed the *Knights Tale*, and neither in metrical nor in other merits does the one rank higher than its companion piece. That the *Phyllis* and the *Ariadne* belong very close together probably no one, from a comparison of the two poems, would ever doubt. But in the *Phyllis* it is distinctly implied that much time had already been spent on the *Legend*:

*But for I am agroted heer-biforn*  
 To wryte of hem that been in love forsworn,  
*And eek to haste me in my legende,*  
 Which to performe god me grace sende,  
 Therfor I passe shortly in this wyse.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, against the common view that when the *Phyllis* was written the greater number of the *Legends* as they stand had been composed there seems to lie no valid objection. But if the inferences of this discussion so far have been sound, it follows that the *Ariadne* and with little doubt the *Phyllis*, preceded the Prologue, and since the *Phyllis* seems to carry with it perhaps the majority of the other *Legends*,

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, ll. 2399-2400, 2446-51, 2459-61, 2464, 2543-49. The two stories are also directly associated at the close of the first book of the *House of Fame*, ll. 388-426.

<sup>2</sup> Ll. 2454-57; cf. also ll. 2490-91:

Me list nat vouche-sauf on him to swinke,  
 Ne spende on him a penne ful of inke;

and ll. 2513 ff.:

But al her lettre wryten I ne may  
 By ordre, for hit were to me a charge, etc.

it further follows that the Prologue was written after most, perhaps after all, of the narratives it introduces.<sup>1</sup>

That, at all events, is the unforeseen conclusion to which a study of the facts with no such end in view has led. What farther can be said in its favor? The main thing, perhaps, is that it seems after all to be in perfect accord with the antecedent probabilities of the case. For manifestly Prologues, like Prefaces, are in general more likely to be written after than before the work they introduce, and unless some specific reason to the contrary should appear in the present instance, we are scarcely justified in maintaining an exception. And indeed, so soon as one tries to see why the view that the Prologue preceded the *Legends* has taken, as it certainly has,<sup>2</sup> so firm hold upon all of us, one finds an interesting situation. For, squarely faced, does not the whole theory depend upon a strangely literal-minded, not to say naïve, interpretation of the charming fiction of the Prologue itself? Both *Alcestris* and the god of Love speak in the Prologue of the actual *Legends* as still to be written; ergo, such must have been the case! But to the *reader* of the Prologue the *Legends* are necessarily still to come, and may we not suppose that Chaucer—whatever must be said of his interpreters—was endowed with sufficient imaginative power to conceive a Prologue, whenever written, as really what it purports to

<sup>1</sup>That one or two of the better told stories may have been added after the Prologue was composed, is of course a possibility.

<sup>2</sup>See, for instance, ten Brink: In demselben und im folgenden jahre [1385, his date for the Prologue] mag Chaucer die uns erhaltenen oder verloren gegangenen erzählungen von guten frauen gedichtet haben (*Studien*, p. 149); and Skeat: "I suppose that Chaucer went on with one tale of the series after another during the summer and latter part of the same year [1385, the date assigned both forms of the Prologue] till he grew tired of the task, and at last gave it up in the middle of a sentence" (*Oxford Chaucer*, III, xxii). See also Bilderbeck's view, referred to above, pp. 801-03.

be, and to throw himself back to its point of view? Granted the delightful fiction of their genesis at all, how else conceivably could the *Legends* be referred to than as still to be composed? In other words, does not our common assumption that the individual *Legends* must have followed the Prologue depend once more on an instinctive and unreasoning acquiescence in Chaucer's incredible verisimilitude? That we can allow the statements of the Prologue itself any weight whatever in the matter is in the very nature of the case impossible.

Assume, now, for the moment, that the idea of the *Legend* had been conceived sometime before the Prologue was written, and that most, perhaps all, of the individual narratives had already been written. That will account at once for the almost uniform inferiority of the greater number of them, metrically and otherwise, to the Prologue. Assume further that Chaucer's weariness with the plan, manifest in certain of the *Legends* themselves, had led him to lay it aside for a time, and that later, through the reception accorded the *Troilus* (to be considered in a moment), an occasion had arisen for clever and brilliant utilization of the older material. Even apart from the actual evidence for the earlier date of the *Legends*, such a theory seems to involve fewer difficulties than that which has to account for the manifest inferiority of supposedly later to earlier work—of the *Legends* not only to the Prologue but to the *Knight's Tale* and the *Troilus*—and that, too, in the period of the poet's prime.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It will at once be objected that the Prologue itself implies a greater number of *Legends* than are actually extant, so that its allusions to the *Legends* as still to be composed are at least not wholly the poet's pleasing fiction. It may be granted that Chaucer possibly intended, even when he wrote the Prologue, to continue at some later day the execution of his plan. The present argument deals and can deal only with the stories which we have. But have not, in general, Chaucer's statements regarding the details of the continuation of the *Legend* been taken far too seriously?

There are, however, other considerations which must be taken into account before a final estimate is made.

Much has been made of the lists of names in the *balade* and the Man of Law's head-link. But so soon as one really examines the facts, it seems obvious that Chaucer is speaking in the most general terms. I subjoin the lists of women in (a) the *House of Fame*, I, 380-426; (b) the titles of the *Legends* actually written; (c) the *balade* of the Prologue; and (d) the Man of Law's head-link. One might add at least four names, the rest being rather remote, from the *Franklin's Tale* (F. 1405-8, 1442-8), but the connection is not so close. The lists are as follows:

- (a) Dido, Phyllis, Briseida, Oënone, Isiphile and Medea, Dyanira, Ariadne (8).
- (b) Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle and Medea, Lucretia, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis, Hypermnestra, [Alceste] (11).
- (c) [Absalon], Ester, [Jonathas], Penelopee, Marcia Catoun, Isoude, Eleyne, Lavyne, Lucesse, Polixene, Cleopatre, Tisbe, Herro, Dido, Laudomia, Phyllis, Canace, Ysiphile, Ypermistre, Adriane, Alceste (19).
- (d) Lucesse, Tisbee, Dido, Phyllis, Dianire, Hermion, Adriane, Isiphilee, Erro, Eleyne, Brixseyda, Ladomëa, Medëa, Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste, [Canacee] (17).

Of these, *eight* names occur in but *one* of the lists: Oënone (a), Philomela (b), Ester (c), Marcia Catoun (c), Isoude (c), Lavyne (c), Polixene (c), Hermion (d); *eight* occur in *two* lists: Briseida (ad), Dyanira (ad), Cleopatra (bc), Eleyne (cd), Herro (cd), Canacee (c[d]), Penelopee (cd), Ladomea (cd); *four* occur in *three* lists: Tisbe (bcd), Hypermestre (bcd), Alceste ([b]cd), Lucesse (bcd); only *five* (5) occur in all *four* lists: Dido (abcd), Phyllis (abcd), Isiphile and Medea (abc[-Medea]d), Ariadne (abcd).

One may put the case another way:

- (1) Of one *Legend* the heroine (*Philomela*) is in none of the other lists.
- (2) Five names in the *balade* (*Ester*, *Marcia Catoun*, *Isoude*, *Lavyne*, *Polixene*) do not occur in the other lists.
- (3) The heroines of two of the *Legends* (*Philomela* and *Medea*) are not included in the *balade*.
- (4) Six names in the *balade* are not in the head-link (*i. e.*, those of (2) and *Cleopatra*).
- (5) Three names in the head-link are not in the *balade* (*Hermion*, *Briseida*, *Dyanira*).
- (6) The heroines of two of the *Legends* are not in the head-link (*Philomela*, *Cleopatra*).

## IV.

The facts pointed out with regard to the *Ariadne* make possible still another inference. The *Ariadne*, it has been shown, seems certainly to have preceded the *Palamon and Arcite*. But the *Hous of Fame* clearly antedated the *Ariadne*. That, of course, no one has hitherto dreamed of denying, since the *Legend of Ariadne* has been assumed to follow the Prologue, which the *Hous of Fame* in turn admittedly preceded. But on any hypothesis the conclusion seems clearly to hold, since to suppose that Chaucer would insert in the *Hous of Fame* the sketch of Ariadne's story found at the close of Book I<sup>1</sup> after he had already elaborated it in the *Legend* is to the last degree improbable.<sup>2</sup> If, however, the *Hous of Fame* preceded the *Ariadne*, on the hypothesis above it also preceded the *Palamon*—a conclusion which may turn out to be more significant.

Leaving that, however, for the moment, it may be well to consider at this point the relation between the *Troilus* and the Prologue.<sup>3</sup> Starting from the side of the *Troilus*, ten

- (7) Seven [eight] names in the head-link have no *Legends* (*Hermion*, *Briseida*, *Dyanira*, *Eleyne*, *Herro*, *Penelopee*, *Ladomea*, [Canacee]; I have included *Alceste* among the *Legends*).
- (8) Ten names in the *balade* have no *Legends* (i. e., those of (2) and *Herro*, *Canacee*, *Penelopee*, *Ladomea*, *Eleyne*).

The confusion is inextricable, and it seems hard to believe that Chaucer ever intended to do more than give indefinite lists of more or less typical names, such as one finds by the score in Deschamps, Froissart, and their contemporaries. Since the above note was written, a similar conviction has been expressed by Dr. French, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 405-426.

<sup>2</sup> The same argument applies to the story of Phyllis (H. F., I, 388-396) and to a less degree to that of Dido (H. F., I, 239-382).

<sup>3</sup> On account of Professor Tatlock's very full and able treatment of the various theories concerned with the chronology of Chaucer's middle period in the forthcoming work already referred to, I have not felt myself at liberty to

Brink pointed out most explicitly the probability of close chronological connection between the two. After citing particularly *Troilus*, v, stanzas 254, 219, he concludes: "Der zusammenhang mit dem prolog der legende liegt so klar am tage, dass es mir unmöglich scheint, einen längeren zeitraum zwischen der vollendung des Troylus und der abfassung jenes prologs anzunehmen."<sup>1</sup> With this view Professor Skeat, on the basis of the same stanzas, concurs: "That it [the Prologue] was written at no great interval after Troilus appears from the fact that even while writing Troilus, Chaucer had already been meditating upon the goodness of Alcestis, of which the Prologue to the *Legend* says so much."<sup>2</sup> To the stanzas referred to by ten Brink and Skeat should be added another,<sup>3</sup> no less suggestive, namely, v, 255 :

Ne I sey not this al-only for these men,  
*But most for wommen that bitrayed be*  
*Through false folk ; god yeve hem sorwe, amen !*  
*That with hir grete wit and subtiltee*  
 Bitrayse yow ! and this comveveth me  
 To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,  
*Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye !*

For what this stanza does is to enunciate with great clearness the specific theme of the *Legend*, as it is expressed not only in the Prologue, but in a number of the individual narratives :

And telle of false men that hem bitrayen ;<sup>4</sup>  
 But thus this false lover can begyle  
 His trewe love. *The devil him quyte his whyle !*<sup>5</sup>

enter, in many cases, into so full a discussion as I should otherwise have deemed necessary of the views of different investigators. Such views have, I believe, been none the less taken into account.

<sup>1</sup> *Studien*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford Chaucer*, III, xviii.

<sup>3</sup> To the significance of this stanza Professor Kittredge first called my attention.

<sup>4</sup> Prologue, B. 486 = A. 476.

<sup>5</sup> *Leg.*, 2226-27.

*With swiche an art and swiche sotelte*  
 As thou thy-selven hast begyled me.<sup>1</sup>  
*Be war, ye women, of your sotil fo . . .*  
 And trusteth, as in love, no man but me.<sup>2</sup>  
*Ye may be war of men, yif that yow liste.*<sup>3</sup>

That the idea of the *Legend* in general and of the Prologue in particular, so far as it concerned Alcestis, was very definitely in Chaucer's mind at the close of his work on the *Troilus* seems, then, indisputable—a fact which, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, certainly points to a close temporal relation between the two.

The possibility of such opposing evidence will be considered in a moment; meantime it should be noted that if one approach the problem from the side of the Prologue, the probability of close chronological connection with the *Troilus* seems even greater. For sufficient emphasis has scarcely been placed, perhaps, on the fact that the immediate occasion of the Prologue was manifestly the stir caused by the publication of the *Troilus*, with which Chaucer also links his translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*.<sup>4</sup> The situation which the Prologue implies must of course not be taken over seriously. That there was abundant talk and no small lifting of eyebrows in court circles one may be sure; how could it be otherwise when a full-fledged modern "problem novel" gradually unfolded before astonished mediæval eyes? But what Chaucer seems to have seen in the gossip of the court—reacting somewhat as undoubtedly he was himself against the sombre note in which his "litel tragedie" had closed—

<sup>1</sup> *Leg.*, 2546-47.

<sup>2</sup> *Leg.*, 2559, 2561.

<sup>3</sup> *Leg.* 2387.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Professor Kittredge for the query whether Deschamps's insistence on this particular work of Chaucer's may not have had something to do with its being mentioned so prominently in the Prologue (although its association with the *Troilus* would of course be natural enough in any case). This gives another point of contact between the Prologue and Deschamps.

was the opportunity for a brilliant and effective occasional poem, and also the psychological moment for launching his collection of stories of women "trewe as steel." Suppose the *Troilus* to have been still the talk of the court, and one can picture the zest with which the clever turn given in the Prologue to the passing comment would be welcomed. Suppose on the other hand the *Troilus* to have been written long before, and all the touch and go, all the exquisite aptness, of the retort is gone.<sup>1</sup> Either the Prologue and the *Troilus*, then, lie close together, or Chaucer, we must believe, for once arrived very late upon the scene. The alternative seems scarcely a real one.

The impression of a close relation between the *Troilus* and the Prologue, moreover, is materially heightened by the fact pointed out in the earlier part of this discussion,<sup>2</sup> that in the B-version of the Prologue Chaucer makes use of three of the opening stanzas of the *Filostrato*, which he had rejected in the composition of the *Troilus*. I have attempted, in the passage referred to, to show that the earlier rejection of the stanzas from the *Troilus* was due to causes wholly independent of the merits of the lines themselves, while their inclusion in the Prologue demonstrates the appeal their beauty must have made even at the time when for other reasons they were passed over. And it is at least a fair inference that the *Filostrato* had not long ceased to occupy Chaucer's mind when this singularly apt transfer of lines too good to lose was made. The references in the *Troilus* to Alcestis and to the theme of the *Legend*; the fashion in

<sup>1</sup> The god of Love himself knew better :

For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,  
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more.

*Bis dat qui cito dat!*

<sup>2</sup> *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xix, 618-626.



which the *Troilus* itself is made the occasion for the Prologue and the *Legend*; the use in the Prologue of the stanzas from the *Filostrato*, all serve, accordingly, to create a strong presumption in favor of a date for the *Troilus* not far from that of the first form of the Prologue.

There is, however, what seems at first sight to be, in the mention of Troilus and "la belle Creseide" in Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme*, discussed in a very important article by Professor Tatlock in the first volume of *Modern Philology*,<sup>1</sup> a fatal objection to any view which closely connects in time the *Troilus* and the Prologue. "Obviously," Professor Tatlock believes, "the reference cannot be to the *Filostrato*;" Chaucer's poem is "the only English work before the end of the century which treats the story at all"; and "Gower spells the heroine's name with a *C*, though it is *Greseida* in Boccaccio and *Briseida* (or *Briseide*) in Benoît de S. Maur and Guido delle Colonne. . . . So early a passage," he concludes, "as that which mentions the *Troilus*, ll. 5245-56, can hardly have been written later than 1376. Therefore, unless it can be proved either that Gower's reference is not to Chaucer's poem, or that this portion of the *Mirour* was written later than is supposed, we must accept 1376 as the latest possible date for Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*."<sup>2</sup>

Despite one's respect for Professor Tatlock's judgment, one is still compelled rigidly to examine the conclusions he has so convincingly stated. And first of all, why is it obvious that Gower's reference cannot be to the *Filostrato*? Waiving for a moment the question of the initial letter of the heroine's name, even though one grant that Chaucer was the only Englishman then likely to possess a copy of Boccaccio's poem (a large concession, be it said in passing) the fact

<sup>1</sup> I, 317 ff. The passage from the *Mirour* is quoted in full on p. 831 of the present article.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 323-24.

remains that the reference in question happens to be made by precisely the one other Englishman most likely to know about that (possibly unique) copy. For this premise of Professor Tatlock's seems not only in general to overlook the probability that Chaucer would speak of his new finds to his friends, but in this particular instance to assume that precisely the friend and brother-poet to whom the completed *Troilus* was dedicated learned then for the first time to know "la geste de Troilus et de la belle Creseide." One seems bound, on the other hand, to take distinctly into account the possibility that John Gower, and others as well, might very readily have known the *Filostrato*, or at all events its story, before Chaucer put pen to paper for his *Troilus*.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, is it not after all entirely beside the point to assume with Tatlock that the poem to which Gower refers "is most probably in English, for though Gower's poem is in French, he had England chiefly in mind"? But what England? Gower's own French and Latin poems were presumably also written for Englishmen, and his countrymen who could read them could certainly also read—to go no farther—the French of Benoît and the Latin of Guido. Tatlock's assumption, indeed, seems to overlook the obvious fact that Gower was

<sup>1</sup>Such seems also to be Professor Macaulay's opinion. For Tatlock (p. 322, n. 3), in crediting to Hamilton (*Chaucer's Indebtedness to Guido delle Colonne*, p. 136) the discovery of the reference, has apparently overlooked the fact that Macaulay himself had made use of it in his edition of Gower: "This [*i. e.*, the *Mirour*] was the work upon which Gower's reputation rested when Chaucer submitted *Troilus* to his judgment, and though he may have been indulging his sense of humour in making Gower one of the correctors of his version of that—

'geste  
De Troÿlus et de la belle  
Creseide,'

which the moralist had thought only good enough for the indolent worshipper to dream of in church," etc. (*Works of Gower*, I, xii, xiii).

but one of hundreds of tri-lingual Englishmen, to whom allusions at least to French and Latin writings would be perfectly intelligible. If one accept it, by the same token "danz Catoun" of Somnolent's very next stanza (l. 5266) was also "probably in English"—to say nothing of Seneca, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, Bernard, Ambrose, Tullius, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore, Horace, Martial, Ovid, Fulgentius, Chrysostom, Cyprian, and others not a few, specifically named in the *Mirour*.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be nothing in the reference itself which warrants any definite assertion whatever as to the language of the "geste" Gower had in mind.<sup>2</sup> Nor does the contention, resting presumably on the words "la geste" of the original, that "Gower's reference has little point unless it is to a well-known poem of considerable length on the subject of Troilus and Criseyde only" seem to bear close inspection. As for the "well-known," one can but think of the allusion to "al the love of Palamon and Arcite Of Thebes, *though the story is knowen lyte*," and of Froissart's reference in the *Paradys d'Amours* to the characters in his own *Meliador*.<sup>3</sup> Nor can the statement be made too emphatic that the indubitable fact that Troilus actually heads the list of lovers in Froissart's *Paradys d'Amours* before 1369,<sup>4</sup> goes far to break the force of every argument whatsoever drawn from the supposed unfamiliarity of the Troilus-Criseyda story before Chaucer's

<sup>1</sup> See *Works*, ed. Macaulay, I, lvii-lviii.

<sup>2</sup> This consideration breaks the force of Tatlock's statement that Chaucer's *Troilus* "is the only English work before the end of the century which treats the story at all." As for the accuracy of the statement itself, one should bear in mind the possibilities in the case of the *Laud Troy-book*, as stated by Miss Kemp (*Eng. Stud.*, xxix, 3-6) and discussed by Wülfing (*ib.*, 377-78, cf. 396).

<sup>3</sup> See Kittredge, *Englische Studien*, xxvi, 330-31.

<sup>4</sup> *Paradys d'Amours*, l. 974; see Tatlock, *op. cit.*, 323, note; cf. *Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, xix, 648.

time. And as regards the restriction of Gower's reference to a poem of considerable length on the subject of Troilus and Creseida only, precisely the same logic would lead us to conclude, for example, that Froissart's references to his "trettiés amourens de Pynotëus et de Neptisphele,"<sup>1</sup> or his "*livret de Pynotëus et de Neptisphele*" as he more frequently calls it,<sup>2</sup> were to an independent poem of considerable length on the subject of Pynotëus and Neptisphele only, whereas the story is in fact but an episode in *La Prison Amoureuse* itself.<sup>3</sup> That the point of Gower's allusion depends in the least on the manner in which the story referred to was told, it is very difficult to see.<sup>4</sup>

Tatlock's argument, then, that Gower's reference is to Chaucer's *Troilus*, rests in the last analysis on a single letter, the initial *C* of the heroine's name, and despite the seeming triviality of the detail the logic is at first blush amazingly convincing. But it in turn rests, as a matter of fact, on certain assumptions of doubtful validity. One such assumption is that Chaucer himself was the innovator in the change from *B* or *G* to *C*. On the other hand there is undoubtedly a possibility for which Tatlock's own reference<sup>5</sup> to the facts gives ample evidence. "On sait," says Morf in his review<sup>6</sup> of Gorra's *Testi inediti di storia Trojana*, "que Boccace dans le *Filistrato* appelle l'heroine *Griseida* et non

<sup>1</sup> *Oeuvres*, ed. Scheler, I, 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, I, 287, 323, 327, 340.

<sup>3</sup> Ll. 1316-1995. Froissart's reference is, indeed, doubly suggestive, for it seems to obviate entirely any necessity of assuming that the Man of Law's statement, "In yonthe he made of Ceys and Alcion" (B. 57), refers to an originally separate work of Chaucer's rather than to the existing episode in the *Book of the Duchesse*.

<sup>4</sup> The bearing of this is manifest upon Tatlock's reference to the *Troilus* as the only work known in the fourteenth century except the *Filistrato*, "in which the story of Troilus forms anything but an episode."

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 323, n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Romania*, XXI, 101, n. 1, referred to by Tatlock.

Briseida, et c'est sans doute l'influence de son poème qui a amené quelque copiste des versions de Guido à introduire *Criseida*, *Griseida*, dans leurs textes (ainsi dans les MSS. Palat. 154 (1374) et 89-44 (xv<sup>e</sup> siècle) de *A* et le MS. Gadd.—45 (xv<sup>e</sup> siècle) de *C*).” As early as 1374, then, at least one MS. of Guido had been influenced by Boccaccio in this very detail.<sup>1</sup> Not only so, but there is unimpeachable evidence that very little later than Chaucer's time Boccaccio's *G* had become *C* in the independent French rendering of the *Filostrato* itself. The translation of Pierre de Beauvau was made at the extreme end of the fourteenth century or during the first years of the fifteenth.<sup>2</sup> Of this translation there are in the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris six MSS., all but one of which have *Creseide*, the sixth having *Briseida*.<sup>3</sup> One of the five MSS. with initial *C* can be dated, by the arms it bears, between 1407 and 1409; the others have no date, but are assigned to the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> That is to say, before Chaucer wrote, the form in *C* was not only certainly known, but may well enough have been familiar through MSS. of Guido influenced as above.<sup>5</sup> It may even have existed independently in the MSS. of the *Filostrato* itself, under the influence of the well-known name of the other

<sup>1</sup>Tatlock seems to have overlooked MS. Palat. 154 in Morf's statement, for he refers only to the *G* and *C* "in some fifteenth century MSS. of Guido" (*loc. cit.*).

<sup>2</sup>Moland et d'Héricault, *Nouvelles françaises du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. ci-ciii, cf. 121. Tatlock's reference to it as a "late French romance" is perhaps slightly misleading—though in the previous note he gives its date as above.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, pp. cxxxiv-v.

<sup>4</sup>*Ib.*, p. cxxxiv.

<sup>5</sup>Moreover, "Armannino a précédé Boccace en appelant la fille de Calcas *Criseida*" (Morf, *loc. cit.*). "Mais," Morf goes on, "il n'a guère été le modèle de Boccace parce qu'il ne parle pas des amours de *Criseida* et de *Troilus*." The fact, however—to which Tatlock also refers—*does* show still further the danger of basing any chronological argument upon the form of the name.

Cryseide, the daughter of Cryses—the very analogy which, with a possible side-glance at the etymology of the name,<sup>1</sup> seems to have led Boccaccio himself to make the change from *B* to *G*. For that the analogy was likely to be carried one step farther, the actual *C* of the French translator, or of his copyist, makes clear.<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, another tacit assumption involved in the conclusion under examination—the assumption, namely, that the ms. of the *Mirour* in its testimony regarding the crucial letter stands without doubt for Gower's reading and not the scribe's. Now unless it can be proved that the ms. itself is of even date with the poem it contains, there is the distinct possibility that an original *B* or *G* may have been changed in transcription by a slightly later scribe under the influence of Chaucer's work. That such things happened, we know from the influence of the *Filostrato* on the mss. of Guido above referred to, and from a curiously apposite instance in England itself. For in two passages in the ms. of the *Laud Troy-book* an original *Brixeyda* has been changed by another hand to *Cresseida*.<sup>3</sup> Just that has not happened in the case of Gower's ms., for through the very great courtesy of Mr. Jenkinson, Librarian of the Cambridge University Library, I have the assurance, on his own verification, that the word is "*Creseyda* without trace of erasure

<sup>1</sup> See Herzberg, *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, VI, 197: "Boccaccio wollte die *Chryseis* als die *Goldige* gedeutet wissen." It must be remembered that Gower himself—and we may be sure Chaucer—knew of the "faire maiden" who "cleped is Criseide, douhter of Criseis (*Conf. Amantis*, v, 6443-44; cf. Hyginus, *Fab.* 121: Chryseidam Apollinis sacerdotis filiam), as distinguished from Criseida the daughter of Calchas.

<sup>2</sup> One may put the matter thus: Supposing Chaucer's *Troilus* never to have existed, would such a reference as Gower's, on the basis of known relations of the other versions of the story, have seriously puzzled any one for a moment?

<sup>3</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, XXIX, 5, 377.

or alteration." But any copyist after Chaucer's poem was known might readily in the first instance have written Creseida. It is true that the man who knows most about the ms., its editor, Professor Macaulay, writes: "I have little doubt that this copy was written under the direction of the author";<sup>1</sup> and his belief must carry very great weight. But where a difference of merely eight or ten years in the date of a ms. might so simply account for the phenomenon in question, the utmost caution must be exercised in drawing large conclusions from the data. And while the considerations here offered do not prove "that Gower's reference is not to Chaucer's poem," they manifestly do throw grave doubts upon the inference that the allusion is to the *Troilus*.

But granting, for the argument, that such is the meaning of the reference, the "geste" which Sompnolent dreamed that he heard sung when he had reached the bottom of the cask was even thus scarcely likely to be the story as Chaucer finally told it, where the stress lay heaviest on the tragedy, "how Crisseyde Troilus forsook,"<sup>2</sup> and where "yonge freshe folkes, he or she" were warned to repair home "from worldly vanitee"; but rather the story whose vivid climax was the lovers' meeting. That is to say, Gower's reference itself seems to apply (if not to Guido, or to the story as Boccaccio told it) to the *Troilus* only as it stood before the fourth and fifth books with their tragic emphasis had been reached. With the completed *Troilus* it is entirely out of keeping. And is it indeed easy to believe in any case—as one recalls the strangely heightened mood which for once,

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Gower*, I, lxix. For that matter, if (to put a case) the ms. was written under Gower's direction after the publication of Chaucer's *Troilus*, an original *G* may have been changed to *C* by Gower's own orders—a suggestion for which I am indebted to Professor Kittredge.

<sup>2</sup> *Troilus*, IV, 15, repeated identically in *Leg.*, A. 265, as the theme of the *Troilus*.

in the closing stanzas, seems to break through all conventions—that the “moral Gower,” to whom in these stanzas the poem was directed, should *thus* respond to the appeal to himself and Strode (accompanied as it was by a prayer to “that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode”)

To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,  
Of your benignitees and zeles gode?

If that dedication, couched as it was, made no impression upon Gower, then Gower was not the man we think we know; if it did appeal to him, the embodiment thereafter of the story in a sluggard's drunken dream is scarcely conceivable. If the reference, then, is to Chaucer's handling of the story at all, it seems to show nothing more than that at the time when it was made the *Creseyde* story had begun to engage the attention of Chaucer and his friends.

But when *was* the reference made? Tatlock thinks hardly later than 1376. That, however, is to contract the limits a good deal more closely than Macaulay himself, who cautiously says of the *Mirour*: “On the whole we shall not be far wrong if we assign the composition of the book to the years 1376–1379”;<sup>1</sup> while Tatlock admits an addition as late as 1378.<sup>2</sup> Where there is one addition there may be others, and there seems to be no valid reason why Sompnolent's stanza should not have been written at any time up to 1379. On the contrary, some countenance seems to be given the suggestion of a possible insertion of the very stanza in question by the fact that its account of Sompnolent's prayers *au matin* is not altogether consistent with an earlier passage in the same description wherein it is stated that Sompnolent *au matin* leaves the labor of his prayer to nun and friar:

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Gower*, I, xliii.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 324, n. 3; cf. Macaulay, *op. cit.*, p. xlii.



Car lors se couche a lée chiere,  
 Ne ja pour soun de la clochiere  
 Au matin se descouchera :  
*Ainz le labour de sa priere*  
*Laist sur la Nonne et sur le frere ;*  
 Asses est q'il ent soungera.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, there is, as it happens, a puzzling parallel which seems to give still further color to the suggestion that the reference under discussion may not have belonged to the poem from the first. It may be well to recall specifically the stauza in the *Mirour* :

Au Sompnolent trop fait moleste,  
 Quant matin doit en haulte feste  
 Ou a mouster ou a chapelle  
 Venir ; mais ja du riens s'apreste  
 A dieu prier, ainz bass la teste  
 Mettra tout suef sur l'eschamelle,  
 Et dort, et songe en sa cervelle  
 Qu'il est au bout de la tonelle,  
 U qu'il oït chanter la geste  
 De Troÿlus et de la belle  
 Creseide, et ensi se concelle  
 A dieu d'y faire sa requeste.<sup>2</sup>

In the B-text of *Piers the Plowman* occur the following lines :

Thanne come Sleuthe al bislabeled · with two slymy eizen :  
 ' I most sitte,' seyde the segge · ' or elles shulde I nappe ;  
 I may nouȝte stonde ne stoupe · *ne with-oute a stole knele.*  
 Were I brouȝte abedde · but if my taille-ende it made,  
 Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse 'ar I were rype to dyne.'  
 He bygan *benedicite* with a bolke · and his brest knocked,  
 And roxed and rored · and rutte atte laste.  
 ' What ! awake, renke !' quod Repentance ; ' and rape the to shrifte.'  
 ' If I shulde deye bi this day · me liste nouȝte to loke ;  
*I can nouȝte perfilly my pater-noster · as the prest it syngeth,*  
*But I can rymes of Robyn Hood · and Randolf erte of Chestre,*  
 Ac neither of owre lorde ne of owre lady · the leste that euere was made.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 5179-84.

<sup>2</sup> Ll. 5245-56.

<sup>3</sup> Passus v, 392-403 ; C-text, Passus viii, 1-12 ; not in A-text ; see ed. Skeat, I, 166. I am indebted for this reference to a lecture of Professor Kittredge's.

The parallel between the two passages may of course be accidental; it is striking enough, however, to carry with it at least the possibility that one influenced the other. If that be true, there can be little doubt which was the borrower. It is scarcely probable that the *Mirour*, whose limited circulation is indicated by the fact that but one MS. is known, influenced William Langland; that, on the other hand, Langland's immensely popular poem, of which Professor Skeat enumerates forty-five MSS., should have been known to Gower there is every probability. And that for the folk-rhymes in the head of Sleuthe there should be substituted the bookish *geste* of Sompnolent's dream is what, from Gower, we should naturally expect. But the date of the beginning of the B-text of the *Vision* is the earlier part of 1377.<sup>1</sup> Even apart, then, from the considerations already urged regarding the force of the allusion, we can scarcely be certain that Gower's reference to Troilus and Creseyde much, if at all, preceded 1379, nor, indeed, can we be positive that it greatly antedated 1381.<sup>2</sup> So long, accordingly, as there is no valid reason for supposing that Gower was referring to an English poem, or to one which dealt exclusively with Troilus and Creseyde; so long, too, as at least one MS. of Guido antedating 1376—and others later—has the initial C, as has also the still earlier Armannino and the very slightly later MS. 112 (with the majority of the other MSS.) of the French translation of the *Filostrato*; so long as scribal influence, even a trifle later, by the *Troilus* remains a possibility, we seem scarcely justified in concluding "that the probabilities are overwhelmingly in favor of the view that

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Skeat, II, p. xii, cf. xi-xiv.

<sup>2</sup> "On the whole we may conclude without hesitation that the book was completed before the summer of the year 1381" (Macaulay, *op. cit.*, I, p. xlii), though, as Macaulay continues, "there are some other considerations which will probably lead us to throw the date back a little further than this."

Gower is referring to Chaucer's poem." Moreover, so long as even a possibility remains of the addition of the stanza in question up to 1379 or possibly 1381, it seems scarcely wise, on the strength of the allusion, to "accept 1376 as the latest possible date for Chaucer's *Troilus* and *Criseyde*." I confess to great disappointment at having to give up, for myself, what seemed at first (and to others may still seem) a bit of solid rock in the general chaos. But there are too many other possible explanations of the reference in question to allow one safely to use it as a cornerstone in Chaucer chronology. That Gower may have known, possibly through Chaucer, the story of the *Filostrato* at some time before 1379-81 seems all that it is safe to say; and even so, Guido still remains a possibility.

We seem to be thrown back, then, upon that "*a priori* argument against an early date for the *Troilus*" which Professor Tatlock admits "must remain, not only weightier than any of the other arguments, but one which can be counterbalanced only by a strong piece of unequivocal evidence"<sup>1</sup>—the argument, that is, from "the length, excellence and maturity of the *Troilus*," and the difficulty of believing "that it was finished within three or four years of Chaucer's first visit to Italy and his first acquaintance with the works of Boccaccio."<sup>2</sup> I had earlier hoped to consider in some detail the evidence offered by the *Troilus* itself of a maturity in certain respects little (if at all) short of that evinced by the more representative *Canterbury Tales*, but such a study will have to be postponed.<sup>3</sup> It must suffice at present to call attention to a very few significant facts which seem to indicate that from

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> I hope at some time to be able to go on with a study, already begun, of the *Troilus* in its relation to the *Filostrato* (and, as far as possible, to Benoit and Guido), with special reference to just this question of Chaucer's artistic methods as shown in his management of his materials.

the *Troilus* Chaucer probably passed with but short interval to the supreme exercise of his powers in the *Canterbury Tales* themselves.

In the first place, the paramount interest of the *Troilus*, as in absolutely none of Chaucer's other work except the greatest of the *Canterbury Tales*, is in men and women. One may, perhaps, go a little farther. For even among Chaucer's men and women one feels at least two great groups. Those of the one belong first to the Middle Ages; those of the other first and always to Geoffrey Chaucer. One need only recall together the Duchess Blanche, the women of the *Legends*, Cecilia, Virginia, Constance, Griselda, even Emily and Palamon and Arcite themselves to feel between them all a certain unmistakable kinship. In order really to know any of them one must think mediæval thoughts and see life under unfamiliar prepossessions and conventions, and even so their world remains a somewhat alien one. They are unmistakably the work of a great poet, but one thinks of him first and last as a great mediæval poet.<sup>1</sup> As soon, however, as one recalls Nicholas and Alison, Daun John and the merchant's wife, the affable Devil and the Somnour of the *Frere's Tale*, the Friar and Thomas of the Somnour's retort, the "chanoun of religioun" and his dupe, the Wife of Bath and Harry Bailly, one is on totally different ground. It is wholly fortuitous that they date from the fourteenth century; their engaging rascality and infinite *bonhomie* demand for their appreciation no introduction to a mediæval point of view. Save for the accident of language, they are contemporaries of Falstaff and Sir Toby and Autolycus, or of their remoter kin in Fielding and Thackeray. That some such broad distinction, phrase it how one will, holds good among

<sup>1</sup>This does not in the least overlook the infinite variety of the life of the Middle Ages. But underlying that variety there are none the less certain common characteristics which one thinks of as *par excellence* "mediæval."

Chaucer's characters, no one will be likely to deny. But just this attainment of an attitude which is a solvent for whatever is merely accidental and of the poet's times is one of the surest marks of the maturity of such *Tales* as the Shipman's, the Somnour's, the Frere's, the Miller's, and the rest whose characters have just been named. And the significant thing for the present discussion is that Pandare's affiliations are wholly with this latter group, Creseyde's also to a large degree, and even Troilus's to a less extent.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, we are never in the *Troilus* long away from people scarcely less real than those who later played the little drama on the road to Canterbury.<sup>2</sup>

But even more, perhaps, than in the paramount place it gives, not to types, but to living people, the *Troilus* claims kin with the greater *Canterbury Tales* in a certain paradoxical attitude towards the very life in which it manifests so keen an interest. For in the maturer *Tales*, despite all (and even that too little) that has been said of Chaucer's breadth of sympathy, his "knowledge of human nature which comes of sympathetic insight," is it not after all something very different which is their more distinctive note—a certain *detachment*, not easily defined, but clearly felt; a curious sense of the presence, behind all the actors, of an entirely unsolicitous spectator of the play? It is rarely absent when the Wife of Bath, the Nun's Priest, the Pardoner, the Miller, the Canon's Yeomen are on the stage; it becomes absolutely quintessential in the *Envoy to Scogan*. And in the *Troilus*, whenever Pandare speaks, one is no less curiously aware of something in the background—like Meredith's

<sup>1</sup>That happens to be also the order of their divergence from Boccaccio.

<sup>2</sup>The fact—if I may adapt a suggestion of Professor Kittredge's—that the characters of the *Troilus* are drawn at full length, as in a work of (let us say) Thackeray's, while the others are treated with the superb compression of Kipling's short stories, should not blind one to their parallel realism.

Comic Spirit, with its "slim feasting smile"—which is playing the game with Pandare no less urbanely and ironically than he with Troilus or Creseyde. I am conscious of the danger of arguing from what may be regarded as an impression; but it is precisely this feeling of detachment, of disinterestedness, of supreme lightness of touch in the characterization of Pandare (and this is mainly Chaucer's, not Boccaccio's) which seems to me to point most clearly to a ripeness little short of that of the crowning period itself. It is the embodiment of a point of view which one thinks of as coming, however native the bent that way, with years; and the embodiment itself has the utter freedom from effort which goes with a mastered art.<sup>1</sup>

This sovereign ease itself, moreover, is perhaps seen most clearly in connection with another characteristic of the *Troilus* which it has in common with the admittedly later *Tales*—its marvellous mastery of *dialogue*. I shall quote but one typical example, a few of the stanzas describing the first visit of Pandare at Creseyde's house :

Whan he was come un-to his neces place,  
 'Wher is my lady?' to hir folk seyde he;  
 And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace,  
 And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she  
 With-inne a paved parlour; and they three  
 Herden a mayden reden hem the geste  
 Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

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<sup>1</sup> Pandare's unfailing urbanity, too, his infinite *savoir faire*, his Mephistophelean plausibility are possibly equalled, scarcely surpassed, in the graceless intriguers of the later *Tales*. Moreover, one finds in Pandare, as in them, the same gift of being all things to all men. Few details seem better to show Chaucer's immense superiority in characterization to Boccaccio than his subtle differentiation between the Pandare who talks with Creseyde, and the Pandare who deals with Troilus. It is really far subtler (for the canvas is larger) than the changes of tactics of which Daun John or the Somnour's Frere are past masters, and it certainly adds its quota to one's feeling of the maturity of power that underlies the *Troilus*.

Quod Pandarus, 'ma dame, god yow see,  
 With al your book and al the companye !'  
 'Ey, uncle myn, welcome y-wis,' quod she,  
 And up she roos, and by the hond in hye  
 She took him faste, and seyde, 'this night thrye,  
 To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette !'  
 And with that word she doum on bench him sette.

'Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,  
 If god wole, al this yeer,' quod Pandarus ;  
 'But I am sorry that I have yow let  
 To herkennen of your book ye preysen thus ;  
 For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.  
 Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere !'  
 'Uncle,' quod she, 'your maistresse is not here !'

With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,  
 'This romance is of Thebes, that we rede.' . .

'As ever thryve I,' quod this Pandarus,  
 'Yet conde I telle a thing to doon you pleye.'  
 'Now uncle dere,' quod she, 'tel it us  
 For goddes love ; is than th'assege aweye?  
 I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.'  
 'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'as ever mote I thryve !  
 It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.'

'Ye, holy god !' quod she, 'what thing is that?  
 What? het than swiche fyve? ey, nay, y-wis !  
 For al this world ne can I reden what  
 It sholde been ; som jape, I trowe, is this ;  
 And but your-selven telle us what it is,  
 My wit is for to arede it al to leue ;  
 As help me god, I noot nat what ye mene.'

'And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,  
 This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve !'  
 'And why so, uncle myn? why so?' quod she.  
 'By god,' quod he, 'that wole I telle as hlyve ;  
 For prouder womman were ther noon on-lyve,  
 And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye ;  
 I jape nought, as ever have I joye !'<sup>1</sup>

It would be hard to find even in the *Canterbury Tales* a more superb handling of dialogue than that. The trouble

<sup>1</sup> Bk. II, ll. 78-100, 120-140.

is, it is so absolutely natural that one forgets entirely the technique that lies behind it. To keep all the touch and go of actual talk, all its interjections, its half-questions, its repetitions, its endless *nuances* that connote everything and denote nothing—to keep all that without becoming trivial on the one hand or stilted on the other, is itself no small achievement, as its rarity attests.<sup>1</sup> To do it in verse whose predetermined movement never for an instant intrudes itself upon the seeming *impromptu*, the quick fence and parry of the dialogue, is something which even Chaucer perhaps succeeded in doing only in the *Troilus* and in certain of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Moreover, the sheer *narrative power* of the *Troilus* seems scarcely to have been adequately recognized. Here again one is perhaps in danger of forgetting that the laws of the novel are not those of the short story; certainly, to apply to the one *genre* the categories of the other is scarcely logical. It is impossible at this point to develop what I believe to be demonstrable: namely, that in the handling of a large and complex mass of material Chaucer shows hardly less constructive power than in the shorter *Tales*. Nor can another

<sup>1</sup>Chaucer's use, to take a single point, of conversational repetition (as, for instance, in lines 122, 127-8, 136) is consummately realistic, and yet escapes entirely the touch of caricature which one feels in certain modern attempts, notably Maeterlinck's earlier ones, to lend similar verisimilitude to dramatic dialogue. Moreover, to an astonishing, for myself to an unequalled, degree, the rapid dialogue of the *Troilus*, particularly when Pandare is speaking, possesses actual vocalizing and visualizing power. That is, it carries with it, to the mental ear and eye, its own tones and inflections, even its own subtle play of gesture. The effect seems due, in part at least, to the presence of so large a number of the purely connotative words and phrases just referred to, which in actual speech are little more than vehicles for certain familiar tones and cadences, with their attendant shrugs, or lifted eyebrows, or whatever fugitive gesture it may be. The art with which in the rapid dialogue of the *Troilus* these most evanescent qualities of speech are caught and kept, and that in verse, is unapproachable.



point be more than referred to—the fact that in very many of the individual scenes whose sequence constitutes the action of the *Troilus* there is shown the same unrivalled touch of the *raconteur* which found its final expression in the short *Tales* in the decasyllabic couplet.<sup>1</sup> Both elements—the power of larger dramatic construction, and the supreme narrative quality of certain of the individual scenes—may be here merely illustrated by one or two of the modifications which Chaucer has made in Boccaccio's handling of the story. The long episode of the meeting at the house of Deiphobus, for instance, which ends the second book of the *Troilus* and begins the third, is Chaucer's own invention. What does it do? In addition to the part it plays in the conquest of Creseyde, it foreshadows with consummate art two of the great scenes in the later development of the story. The dinner, where Creseyde sits and listens to Helen and the others of the company praising Troilus,

And every word gan for to notyfe;  
For which with sobre chere hir herte lough<sup>2</sup>—

this situation is made the counterpart of the later scene where, after the blow has fallen, Creseyde sits, once more thinking of Troilus, among the "route of women" who talk of "womanische thinges,"

So that she felte almost her herte dye  
For wo, and wery of that companye.<sup>3</sup>

And much of the poignancy of our remembrance "fro heven

<sup>1</sup>Professor Price has pointed out in a most suggestive study in Chaucer's method of narrative construction (*Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XI, 307-22) that Chaucer "has arranged all the action [of the *Troilus*] into a sequence of fifty scenes." However one may modify the mere number of scenes, the observation is a very valuable one. A much more elaborate study of the construction of the *Troilus* is made in Rudolf Fischer's *Zu dem Kunstformen des Mittelalterlichen Epos* (*Wiener Beiträge*, IX, 1899).

<sup>2</sup>*Troilus*, II, 1591-92.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, IV, 706-07.

unto which helle She fallen was" lies in the subtle echo of the earlier in the later scene. Above all, the whole situation<sup>1</sup> in which Pandare "ladde [Creseyde] by the lappe"<sup>2</sup> to the bed where Troilus lay, is with marvelous skill made to foreshadow the great scene where the parts are reversed, and "Troilus he brought in by the lappe" to Creseyde.<sup>3</sup> This time the echo is even more distinct, and few things could more subtly heighten the insistent sense of an ironical fate that from this point becomes the dominant note of the poem.<sup>4</sup> That (and it is but one out of many instances) is dramatic as well as narrative power—the dramatic power which, in something like the same large compass, one finds again in the comedy of the framework of the *Canterbury Tales*.<sup>5</sup>

All this evidence—and it is perhaps not altogether subjective—tends to justify the conviction long ago expressed by ten Brink, that, "die wahrheit zu sagen, der dichter des Troilus ist von dem dichter der Canterbury Tales nicht gar weit mehr entfernt."<sup>6</sup> When one adds to it the further evi-

<sup>1</sup> At the opening of the third book.

<sup>2</sup> *Troilus*, III, 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, IV, 742.

<sup>4</sup> In a different way this same sense for dramatic contrasts is shown in the antithesis, worked out with consummate skill, between the action of the first book and that of the first part of the second. In the first, the interest centres about Pandare's characteristic attempts to extract from the unwilling Troilus the confession of his lady's name; in the second, it is centred in Pandare's shifts and turns, depicted with irresistible humor, to conceal from Creseyde, while playing incessantly upon her curiosity, her supposed lover's name. The heightening of the situation in the case of Troilus and the creation of it in the case of Creseyde are Chaucer's modifications of Boccaccio. For the wonderful and subtly drawn scene at the beginning of Bk. II (stanzas 1-37) is Chaucer's expansion of a mere hint in a single stanza (*Filostrato*, II, st. 35) of Boccaccio.

<sup>5</sup> Pandare is really to the characters of the *Troilus* something of what—*mutatis mutandis* very thoroughly!—Harry Bailly is to the *dramatis personae* of the setting of the *Tales*.

<sup>6</sup> *Studien*, p. 77; cf. *Englische Studien*, XVII, 8: "Der Troilus zeugt von grosser künstlerischer reife und virtuosität und bildet nächst den besten

dence afforded by the cross-references between the *Troilus* and the Prologue to the *Legend*, and particularly by the presence in the Prologue of a passage from the *Filostrato*, and when one considers the extremely equivocal character of the supposed testimony from Gower to an early date, the conviction that the *Troilus* must be linked very closely in time with the Prologue becomes almost irresistible.

The conclusions so far reached, accordingly, are that most, perhaps all, of the individual *Legends* preceded the Prologue; that the *House of Fame* antedated the *Ariadne* and hence the *Palamon*; and that the *Troilus* is close to the Prologue. The essential point now to determine, if possible, is the relation of the *Troilus* to the *Palamon*, which carries with it also the relation of the *Troilus* to the *House of Fame*.

## V.

In considering the relation of the *Troilus* to the *Palamon*, the first thing to be noted is that there is evidence which points with some definiteness to a date for the *Palamon* in the very early eighties. Dr. Mather has established a strong probability, in the essay already referred to,<sup>1</sup> that the *Palamon* was begun in 1381, nor does any objection to a date very early in the decade seem to have been pointed out. If the explanation I have elsewhere<sup>2</sup> ventured for the reference to "the tempest at hir hoom-coming" be correct, it serves independently to corroborate Dr. Mather's view. But if such a date for the *Palamon* be accepted, it involves at once,

partien der Canterbury Tales zweifellos das bedeutendste werk, das überhaupt aus Chaucer's feder geflossen ist. Schon aus diesen gründen wird man ihm einen platz gegen den schluss der zweiten periode anweisen müssen."

<sup>1</sup>*An English Miscellany*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>*Mod. Lang. Notes*, Dec., 1904, pp. 240-43.

if the conclusions just drawn in the case of the *Troilus* be sound, the priority of the *Palamon* to the *Troilus*. For clearly, if the Prologue to the *Legend* be dated not earlier than 1386 and the *Troilus* closely preceded it, a poem dated about 1381–82 can scarcely have followed the *Troilus*. And, indeed, there is a curious bit of independent evidence, to which attention apparently has not been called before, which seems distinctly to bear out the inference that the *Troilus* was the later of the two great treatments of the Italian material. The main action of both the *Troilus* and the *Knight's Tale* begins with the night of the third of May. In the *Troilus* it happened "on *Mayes day the thridde*" that upon Troilus fell

. . . . a tene

In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,  
And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.<sup>1</sup>

And thereupon, remembering his errand in Troilus's behalf, he starts in the morning on his mission to Creseyde, and the real action of the poem is under way. In the *Knight's Tale*, as is well known,

It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in *May*,  
*The thridde night* (as olde bokes seyn,  
That al this storie tellen more pleyn) . . . .  
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,  
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,<sup>2</sup>

and the next morning occurred the meeting with Arcite in the woods. Of course (as one may always be pretty sure when Chaucer protests particularly about his sources) the "olde bokes" say nothing about the third of May, which is Chaucer's own date for the event. And the curious thing is that just the third of May should be chosen at all. The day seems to have no significance whatever in itself, and the only other occurrence of it which I have noted (with full cogni-

<sup>1</sup> *Troilus*, II, 56 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A. 1462–64, 1467–68.

zance of the peril of universal negatives) is in the *Book of Cupid*,<sup>1</sup> whose author certainly knew the *Knight's Tale* and probably the *Troilus*.<sup>2</sup> Chaucer's employment twice of the same unusual date seems to point clearly to the suggestion of one instance by the other. But can we tell which was the original and which the suggested use? There need be little doubt as to the answer. If in one of the poems the employment of the third of May is directly dependent upon certain exigencies of the treatment of the material itself, while in the other its relation to the story is wholly accidental, we may be practically certain that the instance which grows out of the requirements of the story came first, and that it naturally enough suggested the other—particularly if the two poems were not far apart in point of time. Now in the *Knight's Tale* there does seem to be just such a reason. For apart from the very probable relation of the series in which it stands to the calendar of the then current year, the third of May forms in any case an essential part of the carefully calculated scheme of days and astrological hours on whose every step explicit emphasis is laid in the poem. In the *Troilus*, on the other hand, there seems to be no discernible cause whatever for the choice. Such weight as the evidence has, then, is altogether in favor of the priority of the *Palamon*, already suggested on other grounds.

And, indeed, when one considers the reasons offered for the later date of the *Palamon*<sup>3</sup> (which are not many, for the case has been largely taken for granted), they seem strangely inconclusive. The stanzas from the *Teseide* which appear in the revised *Troilus*<sup>4</sup> have been urged. "If Chaucer," Dr.

<sup>1</sup> "And hit was tho *the thridde nyght of May*" (l. 55).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 753, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> It may be well to say again that this name is uniformly used in this paper to designate the *Knight's Tale* before it was adapted to its position in the *Canterbury Tales*.

<sup>4</sup> *Troilus*, v, 1807 ff.

Mather argues, "on finishing *Troilus* were free to use these three stanzas, that is if he had already rejected them in the *Knight's Tale*, it is hard to see why they should not have appeared from the first in *Troilus*. Nor is it likely that at a subsequent season Chaucer should have rummaged in the unused portions of the *Teseide* to enrich *Troilus*, the *Parlement of Foules*, and *Anelida and Arcite*. Such a process suggests unpleasantly literary 'cold storage'; it is, I believe, most unlike Chaucer. For this and other reasons no scholar has placed the *Knight's Tale* before *Troilus*."<sup>1</sup> But Dr. Mather's last sentence, to reverse his order of treatment, distinctly begs the question. The *Knight's Tale* exactly as it stands no one, of course, has placed before the *Troilus*. The supposed stanzaic *Palamon*, on the other hand, has been so placed explicitly by ten Brink<sup>2</sup> and Koch,<sup>3</sup> and impliedly by Skeat.<sup>4</sup> And inasmuch as Dr. Mather's most able paper, following a suggestion of Mr. Pollard, is itself admittedly the first explicitly to argue that "*Palamon and Arcite* . . . is to all intents and purposes the *Knight's Tale* as we have it," his "no scholar" is a veritable man of straw. Nor can it be fairly urged that it is "unlike Chaucer" to use in the *Troilus* (the *Parlement* and the *Anelida* do not concern us here) rejected stanzas from the *Teseide*, when we now know that he used in the Prologue to the *Legend* rejected stanzas

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> "Ueber die entstehungszeit von Palamon and Arcite können wir nur das sagen, dasz diese dichtung vor Troylus and Cryseyde fällt" (*Studien*, p. 124).

<sup>3</sup> "I follow Prof. ten Brink in placing the first version of *Palamon and Arcite* between the *Life of St. Cecily* and *Troilus*" (*Essays on Chaucer*, Chaucer Society, p. 396).

<sup>4</sup> "Not wishing, however, to abandon it [*i. e.*, the original *Palamon and Arcite*] altogether, Chaucer probably used some of the lines over again in 'Anelida,' and introduced others into the *Parlement of Foules* and elsewhere" (*The Prologue, the Knight's Tale*, etc., 1898, p. liii).

from the *Filostrato*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mather's first objection seems to have little more weight; its logic would compel us to believe that Chaucer had not translated Boethius when the *Troilus* was first written, else why should not the passages from Boethius found only in the revision<sup>2</sup> have appeared in the *Troilus* from the first? Yet that the translation of Boethius closely preceded, perhaps overlapped, the composition of the *Troilus* appears from the fact that one considerable passage from Boethius<sup>3</sup> is in all the MSS., while the phraseology of the *Troilus* throughout has been strongly influenced by the *De Consolatione*. If, accordingly, at least one passage from Boethius available from the first for the *Troilus*<sup>4</sup> was not, as a matter of fact, inserted until the revision, it follows that the stanzas from the *Teseide*, which Chaucer was no less "free to use," may likewise not have occurred to him until the revision, and Dr. Mather's argument falls to the ground.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This fact, pointed out in the earlier part of this discussion (*Pubs. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XIX, 618 ff.), establishes the somewhat important principle that it is unsafe to argue, from the presence in a poem X of fragments from the source of another poem Y, that the passage has been omitted from Y because it had been already used in X. That it may have been used in X because it had been already rejected from Y is not only *a priori* possible, but, at least in the case of the Prologue and the *Filostrato*, actually demonstrable.

<sup>2</sup> *Troilus*, III, 1744-1768 (*De Consolatione*, Bk. II, Met. 8); IV, 953-1085 (*De Consolatione*, Bk. V, Pr. 2, Pr. 3). See *Globe Chaucer*, p. xli, and cf. Mather, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-09.

<sup>3</sup> *Troilus*, III, 813-33 (*De Consolatione*, Bk. II, Pr. 4); cf. *Globe Chaucer*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that one of the two added passages (III, 1744-68) is from the same book of the *De Consolatione* as the long passage found from the first in the *Troilus* (III, 813-33).

<sup>5</sup> Once suppose the inadequacy of the treatment of Troilus's death to have been noticed by Chaucer when he came, for some reason, to revise the poem, and it follows as a necessary corollary that he would cast about for something with which to fill the gap. In other words, the *Teseide* stanzas were not inserted, one may suppose, in the first form of the *Troilus*, simply because the occasion for using them did not occur to Chaucer—not because

More formidable are two objections which (since the order here suggested seems scarcely, hitherto, to have been seriously contemplated by anybody) have not been emphasized. One of them is still concerned with the *Teseide* stanzas in the *Troilus*. 'Why,' Dr. Mather might have gone on to ask, 'should Chaucer have omitted them from the *Palamon* in the first place'? To that the most obvious answer would be that, since he omitted something over 8000 of the 9054 lines of the *Teseide*,<sup>1</sup> it is not astonishing that he omitted these. But the matter, of course, is not quite so simple. For in the *Knigh's Tale*, in the account of the death of Arcite, occur the well-known verses :

His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,  
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.  
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre ;  
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,  
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle  
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.  
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye.<sup>2</sup>

Does that not have every appearance of a shift on Chaucer's part to cover a gap left by the stanzas he has already used? Possibly; yet one is at liberty so to conclude only if there exists no adequate reason other than that for the omission of the stanzas here. Such a reason, however, does, I believe, exist. For one thing, it is supremely characteristic of Chaucer to take, *unless strong reason to the contrary exist*, precisely

the stanzas were not available. It is scarcely fair to confine a poet, in his revision, to the use of such material only as he has acquired since the first draught! Tennyson added in 1842, for example, in the *Palace of Art*, in order to round out a plan more clearly conceived on revision than in the first ardor of composition, a passage alluding to Egeria and Numa Pompilius. Are we to suppose that he did not, in 1833, know of the wood-nymph and the Ausonian king, or that for any reason they were not then available for use? Dr. Mather's argument at this point limits entirely too closely a poet's possible motives in dealing with his work.

<sup>1</sup> See *Temporary Preface*, pp. 104-05.

<sup>2</sup> A. 2809-15.



the attitude which he here adopts towards the spirit's "change of hous";<sup>1</sup> the lines in the *Knigh't's Tale* are the natural Chaucerian reaction upon such suggestions as those of Boccaccio. In other words it is the *omission* of the stanzas which we should expect, and their *inclusion* anywhere which really demands accounting for. And here particularly the insertion of Arcite's vision would be entirely inconsistent with the profoundly human and frankly naturalistic treatment of Arcite's sufferings and dying words:

Now with his love, now in his colde grave  
Allone, with-uten any companye.

That is Chaucer, not Boccaccio, and after that "the holownesse of the seventhe spere" and the "erratic sterres" would be an anticlimax indeed. But in the *Troilus* the case is different. No one, I think, can read the last dozen or sixteen stanzas of the poem, or indeed Chaucer's own additions and comments throughout the fifth book, without feeling that for once his supreme detachment from his characters is gone. The mood of the close is heightened, almost tumultuous, and however the inserted stanzas may lack, here and there, successful verbal adaptation to their context, they are manifestly of a piece with the insistent questionings, "the hitherings and thitherings"<sup>2</sup> of the farewell to his "litel tregedie." From considerations, then, characteristic of Chaucer himself and consistent with his attitude as an artist towards his material, the omission of the stanzas from the *Palamon* may be readily explained.

But a still more serious objection will certainly be raised. A stanzaic *Palamon*, it will be said, might readily enough precede the *Troilus*, likewise in stanzas. But on the assumption that the *Palamon* was substantially the *Knigh't's Tale* as

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Legend*, ll. 1-9; *Troilus*, II, 894-96.

<sup>2</sup> If I may borrow an apt phrase of Professor Kittredge.

it stands, is it likely or even possible that work evincing such mastery of the decasyllabic couplet should be followed (and that in the case of the most ambitious single poem Chaucer wrote) by a return to the less flexible, less rapid, stanza? The objection has, indeed, a certain force; but it rests, at least in part, upon a rather obvious fallacy. A goodly number of poems which are in stanzas at the same time give evidence of immature workmanship, and are accordingly dated, with little doubt correctly, early in Chaucer's career. From these data, however, the jump has far too often been made to the conclusion that the stanzaic form alone is sufficient evidence of early date. But the stanza is also found as the vehicle for what is perhaps as flawless work as Chaucer ever did, the *Prioresses Tale* and the widely different yet no less masterly *Envoy to Scogan*, both of which are certainly late. What is one to conclude? Clearly, that the mere fact that a poem is in stanzas is insufficient evidence on which to base a contention for early date.<sup>1</sup> It must be supplemented by other evidence of immaturity to be convincing. But the *Troilus*, on the contrary, gives every indication of ripened powers, both in its handling of the stanza itself, and in its treatment of the material so embodied. The evidence so far, then, is, to say the least, ambiguous.

But what—ignoring for the moment existing theories—are the antecedent probabilities in the case? It is likely that from a metre, the seven-line stanza, his superb mastery of which was clearly a matter of slow development, Chaucer should pass at a single bound to full-fledged virtuosity in the handling of another and a different type?<sup>2</sup> The only thing

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Pollard's fair and judicial statement of the case in the *Chaucer Primer*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>2</sup> We are really asked to believe that he not only did that, in the Prologue to the *Legend*, but that he thereupon proceeded, in the *Legends* themselves, to go through the omitted apprentice stages after the event!

which could justify such a view would be the fact, which even the most ardent Chaucerian would scarcely venture to affirm, that all Chaucer's work in the decasyllabic couplet was of uniform excellence. The entirely natural view would seem to be (still giving accepted chronology the go-by for the moment) that, the seven-line stanza once perfectly mastered, there would develop alongside it—more rapidly, indeed, because of the skill gained in the earlier poem<sup>1</sup>—the new and more flexible metre which finally justified itself as the instrument of all others best adapted to Chaucer's growing powers. But that even after the newer, the less tried medium had begun thus to justify itself there should still be use made of the more familiar, the more assured instrument, is precisely what every analogy would lead us to expect. For what the decasyllabic couplet *might* have done in Chaucer's hands when he wrote the *Knight's Tale* one may scarcely venture to surmise. What it certainly had not yet done, for whatever reason, was (among other things) to demonstrate its possibilities as a vehicle for swift, glancing, prismatic dialogue, and its flexibility as a medium for all manner of shifting moods. That his seven-line stanza, whose stops he knew from its lowest note to the top of its compass, *was* such a vehicle, he must have been perfectly sure; and that under such circumstances he should return, for the complex and fascinating problems of the "tempestuous matere" whose difficulties he felt,<sup>2</sup> to the instrument which, if any, he knew would "sounne after his fingeringe," is the convincingly natural thing to expect.

Not only so, but is it fair in any case to ask Chaucer, in

<sup>1</sup> It should not be forgotten that the seven-line stanza itself ends in two decasyllabic couplets.

<sup>2</sup> For in this see the boot hath swich travayle  
Of my conning, that unnethe I it stere.

(*Troilus*, II, 3-4.)

the interest of a theory, to follow an absolutely rigid system in the use of his metres—a system which would have precluded Tennyson and Browning from writing narrative poems in stanzas after they had perfected their narrative blank-verse, or Wordsworth from returning, in the *White Doe of Rylstone*, for instance, to a stanzaic structure after such blank-verse as that of *Michael* and the *Prelude*? Decasyllabic couplets are good but even a poet may feel that variety is better :

For though the beste harpour upon lyve  
 Wolde on the beste souned joly harpe  
 That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve,  
 Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,  
 Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,  
 It shulde maken every wight to dulle,  
 To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.<sup>1</sup>

That is from Chaucer's one expression of his literary creed—his Advice to the Players, if one will—and to limit him relentlessly after a certain point to a single narrative metre because he had by that time tried it and found it good, comes perilously near the logic to which Sir Toby's immortal retort was made. For men are still virtuous, and yet there are still cakes and ale ; and that the first great use of the couplet in the *Palamon* should inexorably debar a last great use of the stanza in the *Troilus* there seems no valid reason whatever to conclude. Negatively then, the way seems open to the view that the *Palamon* antedated the *Troilus and Creseyde*.

And positively, also, there is much that may be said. It would be hard to convince one's self that the *Teseide*, the poem with which Chaucer played almost as a child plays with a new toy, was not his first introduction to the fresh field of Italian literature. In the *Ariadne*, in the *Anelida*, in the *Parlement of Foules*, in the *Troilus*, and in the two forms of the *Knights Tale* itself, its material appears, as if its

<sup>1</sup> *Troilus*, II, 1030 ff.

appeal had been so irresistible that Chaucer found it hard to keep his hands off it, whatever he commenced. It is precisely what might at any time happen in the case of a work that has opened up a world of unsuspected possibilities, and has set one's artistic fingers tingling to begin. The six-fold treatment of the subject, in some fashion or another, is one of the most curious, as it is certainly one of the most suggestive, facts in Chaucer's career, and the explanation just ventured seems at least to be psychologically sound.<sup>1</sup> More-

<sup>1</sup>This previous preoccupation with the story readily explains, too, the fact that when he did come at last to the real telling of it, he treated it with a magnificently free hand. The story had become his, rather than Boccaccio's, one may guess, before he put pen to paper for the *Palamon*. This obviates, too, the objection sure to be raised from the fact that the *Troilus* follows more closely than the *Knight's Tale* its sources. For that, so far as it is true, the suggestion offered furnishes a reason. But it is only partly true. For one thing, Chaucer has exercised his freedom in the *Troilus* to an extent that one realizes only upon close comparison of the English poem with the *Filostrato*. In Bk. I of the *Troilus* 67 stanzas (42.9 per cent. of the whole number) are independent of the *Filostrato*; in Bk. II, 192 stanzas (76.5 per cent.); in Bk. III, 188 stanzas (72.3 per cent.); in Bk. IV, 65 stanzas (26.7 per cent.); in Bk. V, 78 stanzas (29.2 per cent.). Just 50.1 per cent. of Chaucer's stanzas, that is, are wholly his own, while 206 of Boccaccio's stanzas (28.9 per cent.) are left untouched. And of the 49.9 per cent. of Chaucer's stanzas for which he is indebted to the *Filostrato* a very large proportion follow Boccaccio only in part, over and over again breaking away from the Italian after the first two, three, or four lines, and taking their own course in the two decasyllabic couplets with which the stanza ends. (See, for examples of this, Bk. I, stanzas 18, 31, 93, 102, 104, 137; Bk. II, stanzas 78, 81-83, 157-58, 164, 172, 194; Bk. III, stanzas 6, 56, 58, 60, 188-89, 218, 235, 237-39, 243, 245-46, 256-57, 259, etc.). Moreover, Chaucer in another way uses a freedom in dealing with the *Filostrato* which is of a far more mature type than that exercised in his handling of the *Teseide*. For the characters of the *Teseide* are taken over bodily, with no important modification; the characters of the *Filostrato*, on the other hand, have been transformed from comparatively simple, though well-drawn figures, to superlatively complex human beings. It is scarcely too much to say that Pandare and Creseyde are Chaucer's own creations—a point, however, which will be considered in another connection. But the supposed greater freedom of the treatment of the *Teseide* is an extremely fallacious argument for the priority of the *Troilus*.

over, an earlier attraction to the *Teseide* than to the *Filostrato* is what we should naturally expect. The interest of the *Teseide* is primarily in the story and its romantic setting; the actors are scarcely flesh and blood—had they been so, there never would have been the tale. In the *Filostrato*, on the other hand, the supreme interest is the *human* one—tragedy or comedy as one takes it; the story is only the vehicle for that. Both interests were Chaucer's, and they found their fusion in the *Canterbury Tales*; but it seems reasonable to suppose that the one which carried the simpler problem would find expression first.

And the actual treatment of the two poems seems to bear out this conclusion. The characterization in the *Knight's Tale* is in one key throughout—"a verray parfit gentle" key, to be sure, but with few over-tones of any sort. The *Troilus* runs through the whole gamut. Even Troilus himself is a much more real person than either Palamon or Arcite, and to put Emily beside Creseyde is like setting Hermia or Helena beside the infinite variety of Cleopatra.<sup>1</sup> Theseus and Pandare are scarcely parallel figures, it is true, but the broad and simple outlines with which Theseus is sketched offers suggestive enough contrast with the mastery of artistic methods which gave not less, but greater unity to the matchless play of sinuous, shifting, chameleon-like moods that one thinks of in Pandare. For it must once more be recalled that the Creseyde and the Pandare of the *Troilus* owe their complexity almost exclusively to Chaucer, and it is just this sense of the "splendid ease and instantaneous power," to use Mr. Rossetti's phrase, with which the supremely difficult thing has been achieved, that gives one pause when one thinks of Emily and Palamon and Arcite and Theseus as coming later.

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted for the suggestion of the parallel between Creseyde and Cleopatra to a remark of Professor Kittredge.

Moreover, such a detail as the treatment of the idea of *fate* in the two poems seems to be typical of a difference not without suggestion. For in the *Knight's Tale* the notion of fate is very explicit; it is much talked about, but one feels no sense of its resistless compulsion in the action. One understands clearly from the conversations that fate *is*, and that it has much to do with how things will fall out, but it remains a *deus ex machina* to the end. In the *Troilus*, on the other hand, it is not what is said about it that one recalls, though not a little is said. It is the way in which it broods over and is implicit in the action, growingly to the end, until in the five stanzas<sup>1</sup> in which Creseyde, alone, takes her real leave of Troilus one reaches, without a word of fate itself, the most subtle, as in the last two lines the most poignant, expression of its tragic irony:

*And gylteles, I woot wel, I you leve;  
But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve.*<sup>2</sup>

And as in its treatment of fate, so in a hundred other ways the *Troilus* is inexhaustibly suggestive—suggestive after a fashion for which perhaps *Hamlet* offers, *longo intervallo* though it be, the only adequate parallel. What the *Knight's Tale* has to give (and it is much<sup>3</sup>) it gives at once. And that grow-

<sup>1</sup> Bk. V, 1051–1085.

<sup>2</sup> Equally subtle and no less characteristic in their fatalism are the lines that give Pandare's attitude towards Troilus's confidence that Creseyde will return:

Pandare answerde, 'It may be, wel y-nough!'  
And held with him of al that ever he seyde;  
But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,  
And to him-self ful sobrelly he seyde:  
'From hasel-wode, ther joly Robin pleyde,  
Shal come al that that thou abydest here;  
Ye, fare-wel al the snow of ferne yere!'

(*Troilus*, v, 1170 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> For it is not so much relative merits as it is relative methods with which we are here concerned.

ing suggestiveness is apt to betoken growing maturity, one need scarcely stop to argue. Artistic considerations, in a word, seem again to bear out the conclusion reached on the basis of evidence of another sort, and to point to the priority of the *Palamon*.

## VI.

But if the *Palamon* preceded the *Troilus*, the conclusion carries with it another important inference. For we have already seen that the *Hous of Fame* preceded the *Palamon*. It follows at once, then, that the *Hous of Fame* was written before instead of after the *Troilus*—a conclusion which runs squarely counter to the conventional view of the relations of the two poems. And yet, as in the previous cases, I believe the conclusion justifies itself on other grounds. For it is a fair statement of the facts of the case to say that the whole argument for the later date of the *Hous of Fame* rests on the supposed fact that the “som comedie” in which Chaucer prayed that he might “make” before he died,<sup>1</sup> referred by anticipation to the *Hous of Fame*. In other words, it is upon the sole suggestion of the single word “comedie” that the whole laboriously constructed parallel between the *Hous of Fame* and the *Divina Comedia* depends.<sup>2</sup> But so to argue

<sup>1</sup> *Troilus*, v, 1786–88.

<sup>2</sup> “Wir haben es wahrscheinlich gemacht, dass Chaucer an jener stelle der dantische begriff der komödie wie der tragödie vorschwebte, folglich dass er dabei an Dantes göttliches gedicht dachte” (ten Brink, *Studien*, p. 122)—and so arose the *Hous of Fame*. The fallacy of the arguments hitherto urged, particularly by Rambeau (*Eng. Stud.*, III, 209–68) in support of the supposed parallel has been recently shown in an entirely convincing way by Mr. W. O. Sypherd, in a discussion to be available later, and it has accordingly seemed unnecessary to go farther into the question here. For that reason, in what follows regarding the *Hous of Fame*, I have confined myself to what is absolutely necessary for my present purpose.



is, in the first place, to take Chaucer with painfully mechanical literalness. For one thing, the obvious opportunity for antithesis and the manifest "scarsitee" of rhymes for *tragedie* break materially the force of the argument for a definite allusion in the word. Opposition in sense and similarity in sound have together doomed *tragedy* and *comedy*, like *death* and *life*, *heaven* and *hell*, to dog each other's foot-steps even more unfailingly than Pope's *breeze* and *trees* or *creep* and *sleep*,<sup>1</sup> and any argument built on the fact that one does thus follow the other is precarious indeed.<sup>2</sup> What Chaucer seems to be expressing here, rather than a determination to write a Dantesque comedy, is a wish for a complete change of theme<sup>3</sup> — a very specific and personal application of the general law

<sup>1</sup> *Remedie*, which rhymes with *tragedie* in B. 3183, 3974, is about the only other word there was to use.

<sup>2</sup> One feels, too, by the way, that "or elles songe" of l. 1797 is a rhyme-tag which, rather than something else, is there because "tonge" ends the preceding line. A somewhat important application of the same principle may be made in the case of the reference to the *Romaunce of the Rose* in the Prologue (A. 254-55 = B. 328-329). For any conclusions regarding the nature of Chaucer's translation of the poem drawn from the phrase "with-ou ten nede of glose" (so B; "hit nedeth nat to glose" in A.) are vitiated by the fact that some such rhyme-tag in "glose" habitually accompanies references to the *Romaunce of the Rose*. (It is of course "Rose" that is the determining word in the rhyme, independently of its position in the second line of the couplet). Cf. Machault (quoted in Sandras, *Étude*, p. 289): *La fin du Romans de la Rose*, Il m'est avis qu'il a escript, Je ne scay en texte ou en glose, etc.; Christine de Pisan (*Oeuvres*, ed. Roy, II, 78): *Bien en parla le Romans de la Rose* A grant procès et aucques ainse glose Ycelle amour, etc.; *Book of the Duchesse*, ll. 333-34: the walles. . . . Were peynted, bothe text and glose, Of al the *Romaunce of the Rose*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> One should compare, for the spirit of the thing, the closing lines of the *Parlement of Foules*:

I hope, y-wis, to rede so somday  
That I shal mete som thing for to fare  
The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare.

Cf., too, the Prologue to the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, and *Troilus*, v, 367-73.

of action and reaction which he had stated earlier in the *Troilus* :

For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe  
 Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day ;  
 And after winter folweth grene May.  
 Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,  
 That after sharpe shoures been victories.<sup>1</sup>

It is a sharply contrasted subject that he wants to treat, in a totally different mood, and the thing which only a preconceived theory could well have kept ten Brink and his followers from seeing at once is the fact that the "comédie" line had its perfect parallel two stanzas back :

*And gladlier I wol writen, if yow leste,*  
 Penelopees trouthe and good Alceste.

There is the same antithesis between the story he has been telling and a theme that he prefers to treat, save that in this case the theme is *named*, in general terms, and corresponds, as we have seen, with the Prologue to the *Legend*. In other words, the *tregedie-comédie* lines immediately follow a passage in which both Prologue and *Legend* are anticipated, and the theme of the Prologue contrasted with that of the *Troilus*.<sup>2</sup> When one turns to the Prologue and finds the same contrast explicitly drawn, the conclusion is irresistible that far more definite than any allusion to a specific *comédie* is the forward reference to the happy change of theme from *Creseyde* to *Alcestis* which found embodiment later in the Prologue. And thus once more the *Troilus* and the Prologue are closely linked together.

But does the conclusion that the *Hous of Fame* preceded the *Troilus* find warrant on other grounds? Professor Kirtledge has pointed out<sup>3</sup> an extremely curious and suggestive

<sup>1</sup> *Troilus*, III, 1060-64.

<sup>2</sup> All this close relation of the *tregedie-comédie* lines to their immediate context ten Brink's theory is forced to ignore.

<sup>3</sup> In his Chaucer seminary.

fact in connection with the *Hous of Fame* and the *Troilus*. In the *Hous of Fame*, as is well known, Chaucer seems to have oddly blundered in translating Virgil's phrase, in his account of Fame: "pedibus celerem et *pernicibus alis*."<sup>1</sup> Chaucer's lines, it will be remembered, are:

And on hir feet wexen saugh I  
*Partriches winges redely,*<sup>2</sup>

as if he had confused *pernicibus* with *perdicibus*.<sup>3</sup> But Virgil's phrase also appears in the *Troilus*:

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges  
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,  
Was thorough-out Troye y-fled with *preste winges*  
Fro man to man.<sup>4</sup>

The lines are here taken directly from the *Filostrato*:

La fama velocissima, la quale  
Il falso e' l vero ugualmente rapporta,  
Era volata con *prestissim' ale*  
Per tutta Troia!<sup>5</sup>

Is it possible, now, to believe that after Chaucer knew and had actually used the apt phrase "preste winges," which perfectly translates Virgil's *pernicibus alis*, he should have made the blunder about the "partriches winges" in the *Hous of Fame*? The assignment of the *Hous of Fame* to the earlier date obviates at once the difficulty, and the point accordingly bears out the conclusion independently reached through the relation of the *Hous of Fame* to the *Ariadne* and the *Palamon*.

Nor must one, indeed, be misled by the admitted virtuosity which the *Hous of Fame* displays. Ten Brink was both right and wrong in his final statement of the case in the pos-

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, IV, 180.

<sup>2</sup> *H. F.*, 1391-92.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxford Chaucer*, III, 276; Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, II, 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Troilus*, IV, 659-62.

<sup>5</sup> *Fil.*, IV, st. 78.

thumous essay. After speaking of the *Troilus*<sup>1</sup> he continues: "Anderseits bekundet das rascher hingeworfene *Hous of Fame* in seiner weise eine so entwickelte technik, eine so geniale freiheit des dichterischen verfahrens und, bei aller bescheidenheit, solches selbstgefühl, dass von ihm durchaus dasselbe gilt wie von *Troilus*."<sup>2</sup> Its technique is undeniably superb. The thing to be kept in mind in this connection, however, is the fact that it is exercised in the metre of the *Book of the Duchesse*—the metre, that is, with which, so far as we can tell, Chaucer's narrative work began. It has long been admitted that his mastery of the seven-line stanza was reached by a process of natural development; if the inferences of this paper are sound, they demonstrate that the same thing happened in the case of the decasyllabic couplet. It is reasonable to suppose, accordingly, that the technique of the *Hous of Fame* stands for a similar development,<sup>3</sup> and that sufficient time lies behind it to account for its virtuosity. But still another thing seems to be clear from all that has been said—the fact, namely, that a period of dominant, though not exclusive, use of the seven-line stanza was succeeded, after a natural overlapping, by a period of dominant, though not exclusive, use of the decasyllabic couplet. In each, complete mastery was attained, as such mastery is likewise reached in the octosyllabic couplet of the *Hous of Fame*. A perfectly reasonable supposition seems to be that as the seven-line stanza of the Italian period gradually gave way before the decasyllabic couplet of what one would like to call the English period, so the characteristic octosyllabic couplet of the earlier days of French influence yielded place gradually to the larger possibilities of the stanzaic form. The com-

<sup>1</sup> His words may be found on page 840, n. 6 of the present paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Eng. Stud.*, xvii, 8.

<sup>3</sup> One may at least indulge surmises as to the probable metre of the translation of the *Romance of the Rose*.

plete mastery shown in the *Hous of Fame* of a somewhat simple instrument then, seems entirely consistent with the view that it preceded what one may readily grant to be the scarcely greater mastery of the more complex forms. That is to say, it is necessary to take into account not only relative *technique*, but also the probable relations of the *instruments* involved.<sup>1</sup>

A graver objection to the suggested order may perhaps be seen in the *humor* of the *Hous of Fame*. Does not that, one asks one's self, point to a period not far from Pandare and the Wife of Bath? It would be hazardous indeed to say that it does not. But absolutely engaging as it is, the humor of the *Hous of Fame*, it is perhaps worth noting, grows in large measure out of a *situation*; that of the *Troilus*, out of a fundamental and pervading *attitude towards life*. The quintessence of the humor of the *Hous of Fame* is in the second book, in the irresistible contrast between the bland loquaciousness of the eagle, during the flight through the air, and the chastened monosyllables of the poet. Nothing could be more consummately done than Chaucer's replies, as if a breath too much might work disaster, to the preternaturally cheerful flow of conversation which the edifying bird keeps up: "And I answerde, and seyde, 'Yis'" . . . "'Wel,' quod I" . . . "I seyde, 'Nay'" . . . "'What,' quod I." Humor of *situation* could scarcely go farther. But the humor of the *Troilus*, of which Pandare is usually the medium, does not submit itself to any such analysis. It plays upon everything; it is beyond comparison more ironical, more elusive; it is constantly passing into something else before one knows

<sup>1</sup>Some, at least, of the theories which have gained acceptance seem strangely to ignore the obvious fact, emphasized in this paragraph, that hard and fast lines can never be drawn where genuine *development* is concerned. New powers constantly come to maturity while old ones are still being exercised; the whole notion of *mutual exclusiveness* belongs to artificial systems, not to life.

it; it is as chameleon-like as Pandare himself. Once more, it is a question not so much of relative merits as of the type of qualities involved, and certainly the distinctly more obvious character of the methods by which the effects of the *Hous of Fame* are obtained does not, at least, militate against the view that their exercise antedated the infinitely more complex and elusive procedure of the *Troilus*. There seems, then, to be no valid reason against, and certain definite reasons for, the view that the *Hous of Fame* preceded the *Troilus*.<sup>1</sup>

## VII.

The general order we have reached, then, for the poems so far discussed is summarily as follows: the *Hous of Fame*; the greater number, perhaps all, of the individual *Legends*; the *Palamon and Arcite*; the *Troilus*; and the Prologue to the *Legend*. It remains to consider briefly the possibility of assigning to these poems absolute as well as relative dates, and to determine, if may be, the place of *Anelida and Arcite*, the *Parlement of Foules*, and the *Boethius* in the scheme. Beyond that the scope of the present investigation does not reach.

The Prologue to the *Legend* probably belongs, as we have seen, about the middle of 1386.<sup>2</sup> The composition of the *Troilus*, then, seems to belong to the years (for manifestly it

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Heath's view (*Globe Chaucer*, p. xliii) that Bk. III of the *Hous of Fame* followed the first two books at an interval of some years rests upon what seems to me to be, so far as it is given, quite insufficient evidence. The third book is more satirical than the other two simply because the place for satire has been reached. It is the description of Fame's doings which gives the occasion, and the House of Fame is arrived at only in third book. All that Mr. Heath ascribes to the passage of *time* may be entirely accounted for by shift of emphasis in the *subject-matter*.

<sup>2</sup> Once more it must be noted that so far as the evidence here submitted goes, it is *possible* that the date may be even somewhat later.

may have extended over two or three) immediately preceding that — perhaps to 1383–85. The *Palamon* we have seen reason to date about 1382.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to think of the *Hous of Fame* as falling much earlier than the very late seventies. There seems no reason to question the view that the *Boethius* immediately preceded, perhaps overlapped the *Troilus*, or that the *Parlement of Foules* belongs early in 1382.<sup>2</sup> The *Anelida* must have antedated the *Palamon*; for unless one except, as is probable, the *Ariadne*, it bears every mark of having been Chaucer's first use of the *Teseide* material.<sup>3</sup> One may suggest, then, altogether tentatively, some such course of events as follows:—

<sup>1</sup>The poem, as has been pointed out, seems to have been begun not long before the end of 1381, Old Style. See p. 841, and *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Dec., 1904, pp. 240–43.

<sup>2</sup>The stanzas describing the temple of Venus may have been inserted in the *Parlement* because the temple had been but slightly sketched in the *Palamon*, or the temple may have been but slightly sketched in the *Palamon* because the stanzas had been already inserted in the *Parlement*. On that score honors are easy. In either case the two seem to belong very close together, and since the *Parlement* probably followed at short interval the betrothal of Richard and Anne, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it preceded the *Palamon*.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Mather's view that "after writing *Troilus* Chaucer began *Anelida* as a pendant, or rather offset, to the greater poem" (*op. cit.*, p. 312, cf. p. 311) seems scarcely tenable. The characters of the poem are the merest lay-figures; its story is awkwardly handled, and is, moreover, perhaps the one instance in Chaucer of a narrative altogether without *vividness*, as a reading of the falcon's parallel story in the *Squire's Tale* makes by contrast clear enough; its stanza lacks wholly the "bright speed" so characteristic of the stanza of the *Troilus*. That after Pandare's inimitable instructions for the writing of a letter Chaucer should insert the long and utterly conventional *compleynt* in the *Anelida*, would be an anticlimax indeed. One may argue, it is true, that the *compleynt* is an earlier poem inserted here, since its mention of Arcite is confined to parallel stanzas (the fifth) of strophe and antistrophe, and to the last couplet of the conclusion, all of which might readily have been added by way of adaptation. But it is hard to think of Chaucer as returning, after the *Troilus*, even for the sake of a stop-gap, to such superlatively conventional work. In a word, except in the few stanzas which tell how Arcite's "newe lady" held him "up by

About 1379, perhaps as the first response to the stimulus (surely not to be limited for its sources to the Italian books he read) of the second Italian journey, we may suppose the *Hous of Fame*, the last important use of Chaucer's first narrative metre, to have been written—a supposition which the presence of passages from Dante (whom Chaucer would certainly read as soon as he became acquainted with Italian) bears out. About the same time, moreover, seem to have begun the experiments with the decasyllabic couplet in a number of the *Legends*, whose subject-matter (clearly in mind when the *Hous of Fame* was on the stocks) naturally enough grew wearisome to him and was laid aside.<sup>1</sup> But the abandonment of the *Legends* for the time was not wholly due, we may surmise, to these negative causes. In one of the *Legends* themselves one finds a hint of the “power more strong in beauty” fated to excel them. For in the bit of the *Teseide* imbedded in the *Ariadne* we have an even more significant response on Chaucer's part than in the echoes of Dante in the *Hous of Fame* to the new world opened up by the books he had brought back from Italy. There seems to have followed an abortive attempt, in the *Anelida*, to use the *Teseide* in a stanzaic poem; an extract from it goes into the lovely occasional poem of the *Parlement of Foules*; and finally, after the story has evidently been turned over and over again, the new couplet, now past the experimental stage, is given its first great test in the first full embodiment of the new material. Meantime,—for that a man who left so many things

the bridle at the staves ende,” there is not a trace of the qualities already pointed out as characterizing the *Troilus*. We may safely assign the *Anelida*, accordingly, to a date before the *Palamon* and the *Troilus*.

<sup>1</sup> May the collections of *Legends* perhaps have been originally a sort of companion-piece to the collection of *Tragedies* which later form the *Monk's Tale*? If that be so, the later return to the *Legends* (with the possible addition of one or two) when the Prologue was conceived, would have, apparently, a close parallel in the return to the *Tragedies* (with the probable addition of three or four) in the *Canterbury Tales*.



unfinished should at any time have had but a single iron in the fire seems scarcely probable—the translation of the *Boethius* may have been under way, and on its completion, if not before, the *magnum opus* of the *Troilus* was entered on. I have already suggested how the return at this point to the familiar stanza may readily be motivated, and with the *Troilus* we may suppose Chaucer's spare hours to have been occupied for many months. The reception accorded to the *Troilus*; the idea of contrasting Alcestis with Creseyde and of giving at the same time an apt turn to the old plan of the *Legends*; the fresh impulse furnished, we may surmise, by Deschamps's message and the gift of his poems; the happy suggestion of the merging of Chaucer's own glorification of Alcestis in the French *marguerite cultus*—all these motives seem to have entered into the genesis of the Prologue, for which the new metre, now thoroughly mastered, was used. And with that we are on the threshold of the *Canterbury Tales*.

The period beyond the Prologue to the *Legend* the present investigation touches at but a single point—the revision of the Prologue in 1394. But that is not altogether without suggestion, in that it seems to help us slightly towards the approximate date at which the *Canterbury Tales* were probably linked together. For there seem to be some indications that in 1394 Chaucer was still at work on his great conception. It is hard to believe, at all events, that the long reference to the *Legend* in the Man of Law's head-link was not due to the recent recalling of the poem to his mind by the revision of the Prologue. If that be so, the story of Constance had not as yet, in 1394, been assigned to the Man of Law. Moreover, the perfect mastery of his powers shown in the revision of the Prologue, as well as in the *Envoy to Scogan* of the previous year, makes it perfectly possible to believe that, despite the expression in the *Envoy* itself of what may have been but a passing mood, Legouis is close to

the truth in his reference to Chaucer<sup>1</sup> as one "dont le génie poétique suivit un progrès constant jusqu'au jour où la plume lui tomba des mains."<sup>2</sup>

The hypothesis here suggested rests upon inferences from facts, and by their accordance with facts its conclusions must be tested. But whatever value these conclusions have, if they prove sound, seems to lie in such fresh light as they may perhaps throw upon what is vastly more important than mere dates,—the course of Chaucer's artistic development.

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> It may be urged, however, that the chronology proposed still leaves the decade between the *Book of the Duchesse* and the return from the second Italian journey too bare of poetic production. To that objection there are two things to be said. The first is that during this same decade Chaucer was many times abroad—twice in Italy, once in Flanders, several times, apparently, in France (*Life Records*, pp. xxi-xxix, and documents in Pt. IV)—on the king's business, which occupied a total of many months and which implied activity of many sorts at home. During the latter part of this period, moreover,—the years immediately following 1374—Chaucer was occupied in mastering the details and performing the duties of an arduous official position. It is accordingly entirely reasonable to suppose that his poetic activity was more or less limited up to the return from the second Italian journey. The second thing to be noted is that even so there is sufficient poetry not improbably assignable to this earlier decade to account for such time as may have been available. I need only refer to Mr. Pollard's cautious and illuminating summary of the matter in the *Globe Chaucer* (pp. xxv-xxvii), and to the suggestion there made (not, of course, in all its details, for the first time) that the *Second Nun's Tale*, the body of the *Monk's Tale*, the *Man of Law's Tale*, the *Clerk's Tale*, perhaps the *Doctor's Tale* and the *Mausciple's Tale*, may be assigned to this earlier period. There also must probably be placed the translation of the *Romance of the Rose*, and a number of the minor poems still extant, as well as Balades, Roundels, Virelays doubtless lost; there belongs presumably *Origenes upon the Maudeleyne*. With the latter one seems at liberty to associate, if one will, the translations later used in Chaucer's *Tale of Melibeus* and in the *Parson's Tale*. In a word, the decade before the second Italian journey may not have been so barren of poetic achievement as one is inclined to think. Certainly there is at least enough that may be reasonably assigned to it to preclude the necessity of urging its leanness as a reason for robbing, to piece out a chronology, the fat years that follow.

















